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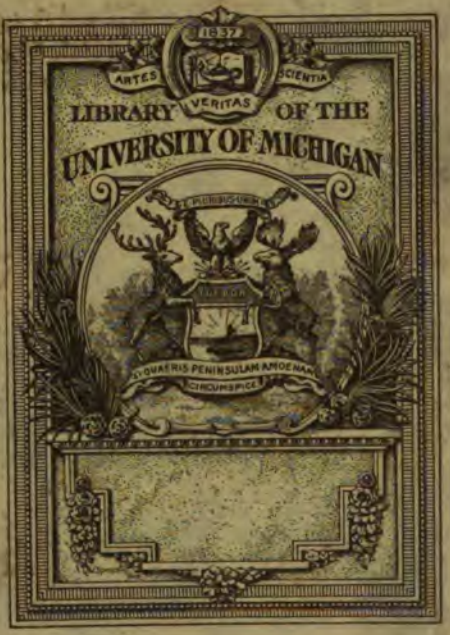

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MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.

A Home and Colonial Periodical for the General Reader.

VOLUME X.

JULY—DECEMBER, 1891.

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MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON MODERN POETRY.

IF it be true, as has lately been said, that there are signs of a revival of interest in poetry, it is possible that a paper with the above heading may just now be not inopportune. Whatever our definition and view of modern poetry may be, at least there can be no doubt that the last half of the century now drawing to a close has well-marked poetical characteristics which have not met with the full attention long since directed to the works of its earlier half. A short time ago, indeed, it was the foolish fashion to say that English poetry would die with the survivor of the two best known writers of verse of that day—of whom one, unhappily, is no longer with us. Quite lately there has been a certain revival of this unwisdom, and it has been seriously sought to convince us that in the greater depth and fulness of our modern life and our wider scientific knowledge, the faculty of wonder, and I suppose of emotion, on which poetry must depend in great part, must be henceforth impossible. I differ wholly from this view. I am convinced that at this moment there are in our country at least as many skilled writers of verse, and probably as many poets, as she has possessed at any epoch of her literature. As to the future, it will be, I suspect, very much like the past. There will be times of ebb and flow, as there have been before. But if any one believes that the stream of poetry, here or elsewhere, has run dry, or will—I can only decline to argue so whimsical a thesis. The more complicated the drama of human development becomes, the greater will be the need of poetic interpretation. It is perhaps conceivable that a growth of scientific intelligence, so complete as to leave no room for mystery or speculation, might dry up many springs of poetic thought; just as at present it is only by an effort, not wholly sincere, that we can reproduce the mythology of ancient Greece. But such knowledge itself would necessarily

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enlarge the bounds of imaginative speculation in directions as yet unsuspected, and moreover its time has by no means arrived as yet. So long as a nation has a full and abounding life, it will find subjects for poems, and hands to treat them, until that slow chill and torpor set in which will mean that the English-speaking races, like the Greek and Roman before them, are played out.

Probably there is no more marked feature of the verse of to-day than the two distinct and opposing currents which stir it—one in the direction of greater strictness of metre and rhyme and elaboration of epithet, the other in that of greater laxity in the same particulars. But on whichever side a writer may range himself, it is clear that he now does so deliberately and of set purpose. The carelessness of Byron and of Shelley is almost impossible to a modern writer of even moderate rank, however deficient in the older writers' splendid audacity and force. The exquisite art of the Laureate is justly held up to admiration; but admirable as it is, it has sometimes, to some minds, the effect of distracting attention from the subject to the treatment, and so of impeding the flow of the narrative. If the only object of a poem were to furnish poetic epithets, this might be all very well; but there can be little doubt that, when carried to excess, the tendency may be a mischievous one. It is a little hard upon writers who have something to say and want to say it, but care little for word-painting, to be perpetually reminded that if an adjective is used, it must be always the best possible—must always sparkle and be picturesque, must never be natural for a moment, under pain of condemnation as flaccid or inert by writers who are wholly incapable of appreciating a long and sustained poem.

The truth is, that while much is gained by care and polish in these respects, there is nothing more fatal to art than an over-elaboration which distracts attention from the real scope of the poem as a whole. That which may be in its place in a clear-cut cameo like Gray's "Elegy" must, in my judgment, seriously detract from the impressiveness of an epic, and if any one will picture to himself what the "Iliad" would have been, or "Paradise Lost," if it had been forbidden to use the same adjective with the same substantive a second time, and the poet was perpetually striving to be in evidence, he will see in what a perilous direction modern theories are really tending. It is not by any means a healthy symptom, as any one can see who has followed the decadence of the literature of Greece and Rome.

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Of another excellence, that of improved technical workmanship in verse, the latter part of the present century may certainly boast. Slipshod versification is now hardly possible. Rhymes are criticised with a severe care which has something ludicrous in it, and furnish, in the absence of the critical power now so unhappily rare, materials for many lines of useful copy. Such lines as—

> "You trample our beds of ranunculus,
> While you 'Tommy-make-room-for-your-uncle' us,"

seem to excite connoisseurs to a kind of delirium of praise. There is hardly a frivolous form of French verse, *rondeau* or *ballade* or *triolet*, which has not been practised in English with an assiduity which for years made the magazines things of fear. The structure of the sonnet gives rise to endless disquisitions and immense displays of useless learning. The *chant royal*, in which the Muse is made to dance—not, it must be confessed, without charm—in the straitest of fetters, has attracted at least as much favour as it deserves. Not long since a writer quite competent to have and express an opinion on most literary topics, gravely stated in print, for the confusion of a popular writer, "that people who write epics in blank verse must be content to forfeit whatever little reputation they may have gained by rhymed lyrics or couplets." The temptation was, of course, immense to bid "the young man go and tag his rhymes," as Milton did long ago, and not dare to revile the finest, the grandest, and the most harmonious instrument of poetry since the days of the Iambic senarius. Still, it is impossible not to sympathise with the purists to a certain extent. Verse which assumes to be written in a certain metre ought generally to conform to its rules. If the metre is irregular, as in the case of the great majority of poems which assume the ode-form, the poet is a law to himself, and should have at least as much latitude as was allowed to Pindar. If he is desirous of enriching the list of English metres by a proximate reproduction of the Latin hexameter, or elegiac, it is absurd and pedantic to debar him from so writing because, judged by the rules of a language which depended entirely upon quantity, a poem which has a pleasing cadence and rhythm of its own does not scan satisfactorily. In such a case it is the rules that must go to the wall. "Take care of the sound, and the sense will take care of itself," is no doubt a popular dictum among present-day critics, but its literary value is doubtful.

The other tendency is in the direction of emancipation from all

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rules that may embarrass the flow of the writer's inspiration, whether in the matter of rhyme, or even of rhythm itself. This is the discovery which will immortalize the American Whitman, when the long controversies which he excites as to the limits of plain speaking or reticence in treatment—nay, even the fine catholic and universalist spirit of his writings—shall have ceased to interest. Probably, like most pioneers, he goes somewhat further in pursuit of emancipation than is at all desirable. But no sensible man can read some of the more moderate of his poems without feeling that with him a new power has been born into the English-speaking world with which we shall have to deal very largely in future. My own idea is that rhythm is an absolute necessity in a poem, which is indeed neither more nor less than a combination of words, having a certain metrical or rhythmical order, composed for the purpose of exciting noble emotion. But there is very little more need for rhyme—there is some, no doubt—in English than in Latin or in Greek, and I hope to see it used with much greater economy than it is now, though I neither expect nor wish it absolutely abolished. Only we must assert and maintain the full measure of literary freedom to which we are born, in spite of the condemnation of latter-day critics, who are of narrower views than our own. I look forward confidently to the time when the ordinary ten-syllabled line will not be the only metre which shall appear in blank verse, but when many others, both regular and irregular, shall free themselves from the trammels of rhyme—if not altogether, at any rate in great part.

There is one initial defect in much poetry, both of the past and present, which I sincerely hope the poet of the future will avoid. It is the neglect of the intending modern writer to follow the Horatian maxim which enjoins that in choice of a subject you should well consider what your shoulders will bear, and should only attempt subjects suited to your strength. I think, too, we might fairly expect to have the preliminary question well weighed, how far the proposed work is likely to be of human interest. It seems to me that the whole history of English poetical literature—since Shakespeare, at any rate—is, in the main, one of splendid failures, which might have been splendid successes, had the writers given the most moderate attention to this preliminary question; or of successes achieved in spite of entire disregard of it. There is no lack of great subjects, nor ever has been. The treasures of Greek fable, the high futures of our own and other races, the pathetic and ever-widening story of human life, from the cradle to the grave,

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furnish surely enough subjects of interest for verse. But will any one seriously maintain that "Paradise Lost," treated as it has been treated, was the best possible subject for an immortal poem, or, except in the hands of a very great writer, a possible subject at all; or that Spenser did not throw himself away over the abstractions of the "Faery Queen;" or that Dryden, with his fugitive political satires; or Pope, with the frivolous "Rape of the Lock," were not wasting great gifts on unworthy matter? What to any but the professed student of literature is the human interest of much of Shelley's great mass of magnificent verse; or, so far as regards its framework, of the interminable and very trying "Excursion"? Or is there any reasonable person who does not think that the present Laureate's fine powers are greater than could fairly be devoted with advantage to the somewhat provincial Arthurian legends, or that the wayward genius which brought itself down to an obscure Italian criminal process might not have been better employed? I remember the dictum of "Orion" Horne on this matter well. "Sir," he said, "I should like to shut up Mr. A. and Mr. B. (naming two eminent writers of verse) in a tower, deprived of all means to write, until they had fixed upon a satisfactory subject, when they should be let out and set to work." Probably it would not be an unmixed loss if such an enforced term of seclusion were to make impossible certain poetical efforts, in which success must, in the nature of things and of the subject, be entirely out of the question. On the other hand, few men of sensibility, who have treated with any success great and popular subjects, can help wishing in the interests of literature that they had been occupied long ago by their betters, and wondering that they were not. It is absurd to suppose that there can ever be any lack of subjects, so long as man has a history, so long as there are passions—love and hate, and greed and lust, and jealousy—in the world. And the list of motives will surely grow larger and more complex with time, even though there seem for the moment no one to treat them. The best way to encourage the writing of good poetry among the young men who seem for a time to have deserted the art, would be to abolish by any means, fair or foul, the mischievous crew who, whenever a book of verse appears, are always ready to crush it with vulgar insults, or unmerited neglect, and for the most part succeed.

There is another characteristic of modern poetry which, I think, should be noticed. I mean its extraordinary tendency to prolixity. Life is somewhat longer, it is true, than it was a

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century ago, but not very much. But the length and bulk of modern poems seem to be increasing by leaps and bounds. Not merely do important poems of a heroic character expand into portly volumes, but even the lyric, which above all should be brief and inspiring, becomes enormously lengthy. "Adonais" itself would have been twice as effective if half as long. In more than one beautiful modern lyric, somewhere about the 50th stanza, lines which appeared in the beginning of the poem are repeated from mere forgetfulness, to reappear again at the 150th from similar forgetfulness, and very likely at the 300th. The lines of a well-known romantic poem are to be counted by myriads. A recent weekly periodical contained a lyric many hundreds of lines in length, by a writer of genius, containing fine things enough to furnish a dozen beautiful poems, but which, flung forth as they were in reckless profusion, could only fatigue the ear. It is impossible for a poet to live in more than a selection of his works, and it is sheer cruelty to unoffending people with a love of poetry to force them to wade through thousands—nay, tens of thousands —of lines where a few hundreds might have sufficed to produce a better effect. We are indeed, all of us, too lengthy in these days, and the first question which a writer, who desires to live, must ask himself, is simply whether he has put what he has to say in the tersest and most effective manner, without a superfluous line. In verse, at any rate, the half is far more than the whole. The only way to make a long poem palatable to modern tastes is to break it up into a number of brief connected episodes. A modern poem, like a lawyer's abstract of title, should, as a rule, be capable of perusal at a sitting, if its whole scope and treatment is to be properly taken in; and if the sheer length of the necessary narrative makes this impossible, the difficulty must be met by such a sub-division as I have indicated into several subordinate poems, of moderate length, all tending to the development of the whole.

Of the modern vice of obscurity I can hardly bring myself to speak, because for the moment the merit of a poem is by many excellent people measured by its obscurity. For my own part, I hotly resent this tendency, in the interests of English literature. No more certain sign of the decadence of a literature and of a nation can be imagined, as every student of classical literature knows well. Obscure poems, obscure in subject or in treatment, can never be poetry at all, can never awake a noble emotion, or stimulate the heart or the soul. They may be excellent as

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philosophy, as psychological studies, as instances of subtle analysis of motive, but so far as they are obscure, and therefore almost certainly unmelodious, they are not poems at all, but only dissertations, which are none the more poems because they simulate metrical form. It is beside the question to urge that they provide innocent recreation for a great many well-meaning people of some ability. So did double acrostics and spelling-bees. A good honest collection of conundrums would be equally profitable and less mistaken. On the other hand, it must be remembered that obscurity of expression has not been unusual in literature of the best period, as in the Greek Æschylus and Thucydides, the Roman Tacitus, or the English prose of Bacon and Milton, and that obscurity arising from the nature of the subject is due to the limitations of language as an instrument of thought, and is by no means confined to verse. And we shall do well also to remember that, years ago, "In Memoriam"—which, in comparison with our later poetical experiences, seems a model of limpid clearness,—was annotated and paraphrased, and generally made intelligible, just as if it had been the Cassandra of Lycophron, or the satires of Persius, or Sordello, or the sonnets of the late Mr. Rossetti. I should only feel inclined to predict that, in the press of modern life and thought, the poet who will not be at the trouble to express himself with moderate clearness runs a great risk of neglect by the very class of readers to which he must mainly appeal. The one hope of literature lies in the fact that if a poet writes obscurely, he nevertheless has some meaning, though it may be ill expressed. If he has not, I believe he will be found out, and that very quickly. But I look forward to such a change in critical canons as shall restore the old qualities of sweet and lucid expression to the place which they occupied, until dethroned by a not very wise clique led astray by the example of two or three men of genius.

I am afraid there is another defect, which it is impossible not to mention, and that is the pedantry of much modern verse and criticism of verse. Of course, a writer who has devoted, perhaps unfortunately, much time to classical literature, must be prepared for the assaults of second-hand superior persons, from New Grub Street or Wall Street, with a nodding acquaintance with the Latin grammar, all of whom agree that he gets his epithets from the "Gradus" and his story from Lemprière. And he must be content to endure the grotesque ill-will of foul-mouthed Thersites, and Tom Fool belabouring his betters with a paste-

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board bludgeon and a bladder of wind. It is of no use wasting time on such people. They know no better, or are not sincere—they are satisfied with their prejudices. No amount of exposure or argument will silence them. But what of writers, some of them of fine and commanding genius, who set themselves to reproduce the Greek spirit by the harmless devices of our school days? Turns of phrase, idioms, grammatical constructions, natural in Greek but impossible in English, are pressed into the service in the vain hope of capturing the Greek spirit. The result is hardly what was intended. That spirit is not to be caught by such devices. The only result is a kind of literary mummy, with scarcely a semblance of living form; and one seems to be listening to a dramatist speaking broken English with a Greek accent, like a Cockney at Boulogne speaking with what he supposes is a French accent, in the vain hope of making himself understood. No more complete or futile waste of time and talent can be imagined, even where there is a technical success, and no splendour of lyrical genius can redeem it. Conceive a Greek writer, with all his reverence for Egypt, thus imitating Egyptian literary models, or Phidias or Praxiteles reproducing the Sphinx! Even the Romans, who were nothing if they were not imitators of Greek models, never went further than a general imitation, although they studded their familiar letters with little Greek phrases *à-propos* of nothing, as if they were latter-day critics larding their ill-nature with morsels of bookseller's French, stale and yet raw, or the Lady Flabella herself. But beyond this they did not go in imitativeness. To say nothing of distinguished living writers and their works, it is not to Mr. Arnold's "Merope," constructed on the strictest lines of the ancient drama, that we turn for the Hellenic spirit, but to the same author's "Empedocles on Ætna," or the beautiful "Marsyas," not indeed antique in form, but inspired in every line with the true fire of old Greece.

Of the modern pseudo-French school of English verse, I know not what to say that shall be strong enough and yet not give offence. To desert the beautiful harmonies of our English poetry for the artificialities of the one European language in which poetry is well-nigh impossible, seems to me the act of madmen. The French language, with its noble and lucid prose, is fit for anything rather than poetry. It may attain to fine rhetoric, it may even mount to the height of a tender and graceful lyric, but beyond this it cannot go, and the imitation of these beauties by foreign writers in their own languages is a mere waste of time.

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Nothing that an Englishman has to say in verse can be better said by means of an imitation of French form and spirit, than it can through English form and in an English spirit. It is even a more futile form of imitation than that of the pseudo-Hellenists, because they at least have an ideal before their eyes as high, and perhaps higher, than they can find in their own language, while the pseudo-French are voluntarily devoting themselves to one in every respect feebler and lower, and neglecting a noble instrument of their own, for one with which they cannot be thoroughly familiar, and which at best has a narrower compass. For the pessimism, the unsatisfied longings, the baulked individuality, the ignoble realism, the morbid melancholy, all derived from this source, which are making the magazines of to-day as fearsome as they were in the worst times of the *ballade* or the *triolet*, it is very fervently to be hoped that they may vanish into the same limbo, and that as quickly as possible.

Now, when we have got rid of the devastating pests of obscurity and frivolity; when our poems are again lucid, and not enormously long; when our subjects possess some human interest; when pedantry has been rooted out, and we imitate Greek and other models in the spirit and not the letter—will all have been done that can be done for English poetry? By no means. We shall have done something to improve the position, it is true. But if we or our successors are really to confute those who say that poetry is dead, a good deal more must be done than this. We must remodel and reconsider altogether our rules for the use of rhyme. We must claim to be emancipated from the absurd fetters which, in the case of heroic verse, at one time came very near to trampling out the last spark of poetic fire. We must depend upon metrical harmonies, subtle and difficult, in preference to the jingle of sound, which is, in so many cases, fatal to all natural expression of feeling. And when we have so far perfected our instrument, we must proceed to play upon it, not the old tunes, but a deeper and more satisfying music.

And when all this is done, will the English poet of the future, the poet long overdue, who will be, perhaps, wholly the poet of the 20th century, turn his eyes exclusively, or even mainly, to the past? A great reward of fame awaits the writer of verse who shall so reproduce the emotional features of our modern life, its doubts and its faith, its trials and aspirations, as to transfigure it into a story more real and more touching than any story of a remote past. The great drama of human life is constantly being

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played on a wider stage, to larger and more critical audiences, with more complicated springs of action, with finer insight, with deeper and more subtle psychological problems to solve, than were possible in old times. It is from these that real and new springs of poetry must flow. I am not, of course, unaware of the difficulty of the task, but that very difficulty is the best incentive. The poet who shall tell in verse a story of contemporary life so as to make it a permanent possession of the nation, if not of the race, and shall so touch the issues of every day with the light that never was on land or sea—not by reflection from a remote past, but drawn directly from the present—has a great future before him. Of course, the task may well be as hard as the production of a modern Madonna or Achilles. Such a dream probably has once haunted many who write in verse, only to fade away when a truer estimate of a man's powers and limitations comes with maturer age. But it is only in this direction that real progress can be made. All the varied impulses and wants of our modern life should find treatment by the poet of the future—the great gains of science should not be ignored by him, nor the insoluble but ever-recurring problems of the relations of the Human to the Divine. Great as is the wealth of English poetry, I confess that to me the great bulk of it—and, indeed, of the poetry of the world—even when it is not mere caterwauling, seems trivial, insincere, and ineffectual to the last degree. Worthier interests and wider knowledge will inevitably generate a higher poetical type, which will be poetry and not prose, though it may throw aside much that to-day seems to differentiate the one from the other. Let us hope that the coming writer will not shrink from a task in which, as Socrates said of the practice of virtue, the struggle is so honourable and the reward so great.

LEWIS MORRIS.

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ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS,

AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY."

CHAPTER XV.

MORDAUNT'S speculation had turned out singularly successful in the matter of the money which Ginckel Vanhomrigh had advanced to him. In the autumn of 1712 he had had heavy gambling losses. That evening at the Manor, when he and Ginckel had lost a considerable sum to Ponsonby and Raikes, had left him penniless and indebted; the next evening, when he played with Ginckel in hopes of retrieving something of his fortune, he lost again. He knew not where to turn, for the money-lenders between Peterborough and himself were tired of the name of Mordaunt, and it would also be the worse for him if his father should find him following too closely in his steps. Ginckel on the contrary was unusually flush, for he had had some great strokes of luck, and had also received an old debt due to the late Mr. Vanhomrigh. So it came about that after long talking round the subject, Mordaunt made a half-jesting attempt to borrow money from Ginckel, and Ginckel, also as it were in jest, declared himself to know too much of his Lordship's affairs to believe in repayment, unless some extraordinary penalty could be devised to induce it; such for instance as a written promise to marry—well, say, their old nurse in default. And somehow his sister presently took the place of the nurse. Mordaunt, whose mind moved quickly when he pleased, saw here a double opportunity. He knew that his mother, stubborn as she had recently shown herself, would produce any sum at whatever cost rather than submit to his mis-allying himself. And he could talk to *her* about his honour, and she would believe in it. Meantime the young lady would be certain to hear of the matter from her brother, and he himself could allude mysteriously to a certain arrangement made in jest, which yet

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might turn to earnest; and in this way his pursuit of Miss Molly, in which he was just then beginning to take a surprising interest, would as he hoped be greatly furthered. As to Ginckel, being an exceedingly foolish person, especially when he thought to be a sharp dealer, he really believed that this written promise would have some binding effect on Mordaunt, who might come to consider marrying a toast preferable to raising the money. If the worst came to the worst, he thought, an action would lie for breach of promise of marriage. Mordaunt had a shrewd suspicion this would not be the case, as the promise had been made only to a third party. It was not wonderful that Ginckel should have no scruple in taking some of his sister's money for the purpose of securing her so fine a match—for the heir of Peterborough was a personage, and Ginckel did not know his pecuniary affairs so well as he had said. He had honestly intended to re-invest the money for her, should it be repaid. However when the moment of repayment came, hardly a week after the chance news of the Parisian lady's widowhood, the spirit of the gambler overcame him. He re-invested his sister's money indeed, but in his own matrimonial venture.

Mordaunt's speculation had succeeded perfectly so far as his mother was concerned. She had paid. But in another respect it had failed. He had taken more pains for Miss Molly than he had ever intended to take for any woman, and he was sure she was in love with him; yet after more than eighteen months of troublesome courtship, he found himself no further than at the beginning. His comrades began to see through his enigmatic silences on the subject and to taunt him with being either ridiculously backward or less beloved by the fair Vanhomrigh than he had hinted. If it had not been for the lively interest Ponsonby and Raikes succeeded in keeping up in his love-affair, he would have dropped it much earlier. His passion, if so it might be called, for Miss Molly had cooled; but this little rub she had innocently given his vanity must be atoned for, though with her heart's blood. It was therefore understood between him and Ponsonby and Raikes that at Lady Ponsonby's ball he was to engage Miss Molly in an elopement to Windsor. If the trouble of arranging the details of the elopement had fallen on him, it is possible he might have preferred losing some *prestige* to exerting himself so far. But this was undertaken by the others, who threw themselves into the business with boyish energy and enjoyment, undisturbed by any sense of their own villainy;

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which indeed was due mainly to their want of intelligence, that would have led them to accept any standard of conduct that was accepted in the world to which they belonged. And in this world of some hundred and eighty years since, a world where women had attained to quite an ideal state of ignorance, of straitened activities and helpless dependence on men, somehow that chivalry to which such a state of things is supposed mightily to conduce was conspicuous by its absence.

When Mordaunt, languid but very handsome in his own hair and a white brocaded suit with gold embroidery, stepped out of his chair at Lady Ponsonby's, he was a good deal bored by the prospect of the elopement; all the more perhaps because of Ponsonby's garrulous excitement on the subject. By the time he had secured Miss Molly as his partner for the evening, however, his interest in the matter began to revive. She was looking so exceedingly pretty, and attracted so much attention, as he walked a minuet with her. The town would talk when it heard he had run away with the fair Vanhomrigh.

A ball in those days meant only a modicum of dancing for the individual, and even in Lady Ponsonby's long ball-room, not more than three couples could go through their minuet at a time. There was much conversation and walking about the reception-rooms and the marble terrace, which ran along the garden-front of the house, and on to which the ball-room opened by glass doors. It was a large handsome room, painted in fresco by an Italian artist with a jumble of architectural decorations and dishevelled gods and goddesses; and being all done with the facile, somewhat vulgar Italian cleverness, and being something foreign and new in decoration, it was the object of much admiration and comment. The front of the house was illuminated, and the terrace set with small tables of refreshments. Such of the company as pleased walked and sat there, and looked in at the dancers through the long windows of the ball-room. A few years later, when the great world went habitually to Ranelagh and Vauxhall, there would have been nothing very novel in the arrangement, but just then it was novel, and consequently delighted some of the guests and shocked others. Mrs. Harris was one of those whom it shocked, and she endeavoured to prevent Molly from going out on the terrace, alleging that she would catch a great cold though the night was still warm. Mr. Ponsonby flew at once to find Miss Vanhomrigh's shawl. Mrs. Harris meantime whispered in her ear that it was highly un-

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becoming for a young woman to walk out with gentlemen at that hour, and she trusted Molly meant to behave herself. Molly, who would not be corrected by Cousin Harris, answered out loud:

"Pooh, my good cousin, do you think decorum resides in the ceiling?" and she bestowed a smile of thanks on Ponsonby, who arrived with the shawl, but left Mordaunt to put it round her.

So Mrs. Harris, considerably huffed, remained indoors while Molly and a little party of other young people, of whom she was the centre, ate iced syllabubs on the terrace; which being lighted both by lamps and the moon and having the walls of the house on three sides, was certainly not a very dark and dangerous wilderness for Lady Ponsonby's flock to wander in. Below it was a trim parterre freshly laid out with statues and flower-beds, and bounded on the other side by a square piece of water with four fountains in it. The fountains were new, but the water had formed part of the ornamental grounds of an older house, and down the sides of it ran pleached walks of fruit-trees. It was intended to have a display of fireworks on the terrace, but this was kept to the last so that the moon might not interfere with their effect. Now Molly was very anxious to stay for the fireworks, and also for the country-dances which were to wind up the ball. Indeed, she would willingly have prolonged to any extent this delightful evening. She was too natural and too coquettish not to enjoy thoroughly all the flattery and attention which fell to her share; but it was not that in itself which made her at the height of enjoyment. It was the altered behaviour of Mordaunt, who, from having been cold and neglectful of late, had suddenly more than resumed his former lover-like bearing. To any but a blinded eye his love-making must have seemed a poor thing at best; but with enough good-will there is no coldness that may not be construed to mean modesty, no silence that may not be supposed to cover tender thoughts.

Mrs. Harris, after the first half-hour of gratified curiosity and wonder at the fine people and things about her, began to feel her isolation in this world to which she did not belong. Her companion presented her to acquaintances, but as she had neither wit, beauty, easy manners, nor the small personal interests in common with her interlocutors which usually go further than all three, they quickly passed on and left her as before. There are persons who find some entertainment in wandering about a crowd, practically invisible because unknown

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and unobserved, but Mrs. Harris was not one of these. She began to think she had a headache, and did not regret that she had so faithfully promised her husband to be home by midnight. Molly was of course unwilling to leave before the country-dances had begun or the fireworks been let off, and there was again a difference of opinion between the two young women, each of whom mentally pronounced the other exceedingly selfish for sticking to her own point of view. Mrs. Harris, however, had the advantage, since she was in authority; but when she came to look for her charge she could not find her. Mr. Ponsonby was very forward in calling her chair and in helping her to seek, whereby he succeeded in preventing her from finding the delinquent. Then Lord Mordaunt came up with Molly's shawl over his arm, and in his slowest manner informed her it would be positive cruelty to the company to remove her fair cousin at this heathenish hour; that since Mrs. Harris promised to go, Miss Vanhomrigh would not for the world detain her, but that the young lady had so far honoured him as to consent to take a seat in his chaise for her return home, as his Lordship would be passing St. James' Street on his way back to Peterborough House. At this Mrs. Harris, who naturally did not guess this stately young nobleman to be lying, waited not for confirmation of his tale, but bounced into her chair and back to her lodgings, to pour her indignation into the sleepy and quite unelectrified ear of her Mr. Harris.

After the minuets and the figure dances and the supper, the country-dances were to begin. These were to Molly, as to most other young people, by far the most delightful of all, in spite of the fact that Mordaunt never danced them. A man of quality owed it to himself to perform respectably in a minuet, just as he must be able when necessary to take off his hat in a manner that should show his court breeding. But a country-dance was unnecessary; Mordaunt did not like it, and therefore pronounced it contemptible. To Molly's surprise, however, this evening, instead of handing her over to some more willing and active partner, he evidently meant to stand up with her.

"What, my Lord!" she cried with a triumphant smile, "recollect yourself! Here's a dance you have constantly declared to be meant for bumpkins at a country wake, or 'prentices at Barthelmy Fair. You'll repent this before you are an hour older."

"No, no. I believe I shall be too happy," he replied with a smile. "You shall tell me how to do't. Only with your

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leave we will not lead off. Hark! the fiddles are beginning. Is it the Barley Mow or the French Rigadoon? I vow I can't tell the difference."

So they took their places, and all at once the two long gaily coloured lines of men and women ranged in opposite rows, swayed forward like flowers in a wind, all bending together in the slow grace of the preliminary bow and curtsey. Up they stood again with a clink of swords and a rustle of silks, the first couples began to turn, and presently under the painted goddesses and the countless wax-lights there was a long shifting maze of brightness and colour; of fair arching arms and jewelled hands, that rose and clasped and fell to the music; of young heads blonde and brown, bright with flowers or starred with gems, winding and turning, crossing and re-crossing among the long soft flaxen perukes, dear to the heart of beaux. Innumerable diamonds flashed from white breasts or cloudy lace with the movement of the dance and the merry gestures of the wearers; painted fans fluttered joyously and rich petticoats passed billowing in and out amongst the stiffer lines of coat-skirts as rich. And as it went on the fiddles could not drown an occasional ripple of laughter, mixed with the ceaseless tapping of little heels and the murmur of broken talk. Molly, to whom usually the motion and the music of the dance were in themselves too delightful to allow of her greatly regarding her partner, did not lose to-night the happy sense that Mordaunt was there opposite. They danced several different dances. At last it happened, though scarcely by chance, that just as she and Mordaunt came to the end of the room near the glass doors, there was an explosion immediately outside them.

"The fireworks!" cried Mordaunt. "Deuce take the dancing!" and seizing her by the hand, he positively ran out of the window and down the terrace steps, snatching her shawl from Ponsonby as he went, and throwing it round her shoulders. Molly ran by his side, laughing and feeling as if this were only a new figure in the dance. In the parterre there was already a crowd assembled waiting to see the fireworks. Still holding Molly firmly by the hand, he passed through the edge of it and a little way down the pleached walk, before he dropped into a walk.

"Nay, miss, I'll not let you desert me," he said, as she showed signs of stopping; "I have a mind to see the fireworks across the water. They'll look finely. Pray now, dear Miss Molly, do not be cruel, but come and see 'em too."

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Molly, excited, bewildered, and above all charmed by this swift impulsiveness so unlike his usual manner, gave a hasty assent. She had no sooner given it and was walking in silence by his side, than she felt curiously sobered. The rays of the setting moon gleamed on the spring foliage overhead, the air was sweet with the odour of the last hawthorn blossoms, and the sound of music, softened by distance, floated to them from the open windows of the ball-room. Had she ever pictured herself in a day-dream walking hand in hand with Mordaunt under such romantic circumstances, it would have seemed a thing too delightful to come true. But it was real, and far from enjoying the situation she was bitterly annoyed with herself for having consented to it, and yet ashamed to go back on her consent. It would have been easy at first to make an excuse for returning towards the terrace, but now at every step she took it seemed harder. She could only make up her mind not to stay long, and hope no one had recognized them as they passed through the dark parterre. As they turned the corner out of the pleached walk, which was not continued on the side of the water opposite the house, she thought she heard a cracking of twigs among the bushes.

"Oh!" she cried, in a low voice, "is there any one there? Or—or do you think 'tis an animal?"

"Pretty trembler!" returned Mordaunt. "Dost think there be lions in Marylebone? Nay, if thou art to be devoured, it shall be this way."

And putting his arm round her waist he kissed her several times. Now a kiss taken civilly, if no longer a form of friendly salutation, was still not held matter for offence; but there was a careless freedom in Lord Mordaunt's manner and conduct, which greatly displeased Molly.

"Fie, my Lord!" she said.

Just at this moment they were aware of a banging and crackling and a dozen jets of multitudinous flames leaping up from the length of the terrace. They could hear the long-drawn "Oh" of the crowd in the parterre. Molly started back out of the glare that came across the water into the shadow of a great thorn-bush just behind them. He followed her, nothing loth, since he had an uneasy suspicion that Tom Raikes, in spite of his promise to depart as soon as he had done his work, might be eavesdropping in the bushes by the path.

"Dear timorous charmer!" he said, "I protest 'tis lucky we

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were no nearer the fireworks, else you had been frightened to death. Come now, these arms shall protect thee." And he again put his arm round her. Molly started away pettishly.

"Tilly vally, my Lord! I mind not the fireworks a brass token—that is by comparison. But you must be sensible that I—that you—that we should be—be thought singular in fine, were we observed here."

It never occurred to Lord Mordaunt to suppose that Molly really disliked being there with him, but she was coyer than he had expected. Meantime there was his chaise waiting on the other side of the paddock, and perhaps Raikes in the bushes, ready to die with laughter should he be discomfited. This thought made him speak low and gave an earnestness to his wooing that it might otherwise have lacked.

"What! must Love be bound by the cold rules of the censorious?" he asked. "By heaven, my lovely charmer, 'tis impossible!" And the distant light from the terrace, falling through the scattered leaves and blossoms of the old thorn, showed him sighing with his hand in his bosom. It was a becoming light, and he thought he had never seen Miss Molly look so pretty as she did now, standing there by the tree, half in shadow, with her serious half-doubtful face and shining eyes lifted to his. He seized her hands and laid them on his bosom.

"Cruel, cruel fair! Is't possible thou hast no pity on this heart, that suffers all the torments and flames of Love? But yet 'tis you, enchanting creature, that inflict 'em. Do you not love me, charming Miss Molly?—O, I am sure you do."

As he ended the fireworks went out, leaving black darkness behind them.

"Yes, yes, I do," murmured Molly, after a little pause, and he felt her hands were trembling. This time she did not resent his kiss; but somehow the declaration which she had so often sighed for, did not thrill her with bliss. The lover of her dreams, although he wore the name and face of Mordaunt, was a creature of the imagination, and the real man had he been better than he was, would have suffered by the comparison.

"I am yours—O yes," she returned, in answer to a tender enquiry murmured in her ear. "But let us go back, pray let us go back now."

The fireworks broke out again on the terrace, and slipping from his arms she ran towards the pleached walk, followed more leisurely by Mordaunt. There was an iron railing across the

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end of the walk, with a gate in it, which had been open when they came through. Indeed, owing to the darkness, Molly had not observed it. Now the gate was closed. She pushed it with all her might, but it was evidently locked.

"Come, come quick, my Lord!" she cried, stamping her little high-heeled shoe impatiently. "Pray open this gate for me."

"Why, dear miss, 'tis locked," returned he, trying it. "This is very strange, but 'tis a spring-lock, and must have shut to behind us."

"Quick! Let us try the other side," she said, and was starting off, but he caught hold of her.

"My charmer, 'tis useless," he replied. "I believe 'tis years since the opposite gate was opened."

"O my Lord, can you not climb it?" asked Molly earnestly.

Lord Mordaunt could not forbear laughing.

"Do you take me for a baboon, Miss Molly?" he asked. Then—"But what matter, my angel? You must not go. You must not leave me now, in this happy moment; 'twould break my heart. Sure you cannot love me if you will not stay an instant to hear me swear again I love you."

"O my dear Lord, think of my reputation," cried she anxiously.

"Reputation!—Distracting girl! I can think, I will think of nought but love. A kind fate has separated us from the crowd, but there's a way out yonder at the end of the paddock, and we'll fly together."

"Pray let us go that way and steal into the house again as softly as we may," returned Molly eagerly.

"'Tis this way," replied Mordaunt, pointing down a path in the opposite direction to the house; and following her close as she immediately hurried along it, he continued, laying his hand on her arm: "But if you contrive to slip in at the great door, and that in the plight you will be in when you get there, unobserved by half the footmen in London, why, the devil's in it. Besides though we now are near the house, the shortest road to it is a long way round and by a dirty foot-path, and you will be missed before you can possibly reach it."

Molly stopped.

"O Lord Mordaunt, I shall go distracted! Let us return and call for assistance; some one will certainly hear us."

"Dear miss, I thought you was so careful. What could give greater scandal than to discover yourself here?"

"Then let us go on," returned Molly, starting off again; "'tis

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plain we must go somewhere. Even you, my dear Lord, will hardly propose that we should wait in the paddock till morning, to be let out when the cows are let in."

They walked on in silence for a few minutes, he with his hand slipped under her elbow and sighing like a man desperate. And it was not every bit of it pretence, for he had really got interested in his part, which perhaps caused him to miss an opportunity. They now turned a corner and saw a bright speck of light, which he knew to be the lamp of his own chaise, showing a gate at the end of the path. He had not the least intention of carrying off Miss Vanhomrigh by force. The suburban roads round the house would just now be full of coaches and chairs and linkmen, and so troublesome an affair was not to his taste. But could he have plausibly explained the position of the chaise, and persuaded her she would reach the house again quickest by jumping into it, he could have taken her far in this neighbourhood, which was strange to her, before she would have discovered the deception. But when they were approaching the gate, it seemed to him to be necessary to bring matters to a crisis.

"Ah!" she cried, "how glad I am to see the gate! But can it be locked?"

"'Tis open," he replied. "But, my sweetest girl," and he here took her hands and stood before her in such a way as to stop her passage, "my adored Miss Molly, you will gain nothing by this except the death of a devoted lover. For I assure you,"—and all the time he was kissing her hands—"I have determined not to survive it, if you refuse to be mine. No, I will not leave this place without you. You love me, I know it; and I love you, dear charming creature, to distraction. Fly with me, fly with me immediately."

Mordaunt was surprised at his own fervour, and Molly at the coldness with which she listened to him. She did not take his proposal seriously, but supposed it to be a mere piece of boyish impetuosity and lover's raving.

"Fie, my Lord!" she said. "You know not what you say. I'll marry you to-morrow if you please, and anywhere you please, but not without my mother's knowledge. This is foolishness. Pray, pray let us go on." And she pressed forward.

"Heavens, child!" he cried, still keeping close to her. "Do you not see these cold scruples come too late? They will seek for you in vain, and your return will be observed. Believe me, 'tis too late."

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"I am surprised you should say so, my Lord," she returned warmly. "If my reputation should be lost, I have still my honour to consider."

"Honour, child!" he said, in the tone of one who smiles indulgently. "Why, you talk like a country wench. Yet you have lived in the world, and know that 'honour' is but a word it cheats fools with, and marriage—Ye gods! How Love trembles and flies before the word! Leave talking of it, till thou'rt weary of me, and hast leisure to bargain with me for pin-money. Let's name nothing but Love. I find matter in it now for more discourses than ever I thought to make in a life-time."

"Then, my Lord," she replied, in a steady tone of voice, the import of which he did not perceive, "I am to understand that your love for me is such that you propose I should fly with you impromptu, and leave talking of marriage till some more convenient time."

"Even so, my sweetest creature. I shall not keep my senses, I swear I shall not, if you refuse me. But sure, you'll never be so cruel. You see the light yonder? Look! 'tis the torch of Love to light us on our road."

"What I see appears more like the lamp of a chaise," she returned, with a sudden little tremulous laugh—for they had now got near the gate. "But no matter. Whither should it light us?"

"To Windsor, child," he cried triumphantly, and put his arm round her.

"How comes the chaise there, my Lord?" she asked, in a voice again steadied by such an effort that it sounded indifferent. "Whose is it?"

"'Tis yours, my angel, yours; that and everything else I possess."

So quick is thought that in the moment that he stooped his tall head to bring it close above hers, it passed through his mind that the game was won; at the expense no doubt of a confounded deal of talking, but somehow the eloquence had flowed with much less trouble than he would have supposed. As his curls brushed the fading flowers in Molly's hair, right in his face, fierce and direct as a blow, came the words—

"Liar! Base, treacherous creature! I detest thee!"

And as at a blow a man's wrath will blaze up to the height instantaneously, so at these words Mordaunt started away from her in a passion of bitter anger.

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"Why, madam," he cried, "how long is it since you swore you loved me—loved me with all your dear little heart? Is't ten minutes or fifteen? Not twenty, I'll take my oath. You know you said you loved me, and I advise you for you own sake to stand by your words. If you don't, pray what excuse have you for being here? Answer me that, Miss Molly."

Molly, after that one burst of uncontrollable indignation, had regained an external calmness. "'Tis true, my Lord, I loved you; but you have very completely cured me of that folly."

"I perceive, Miss Molly. You loved the name of Lady Mordaunt, you loved the charming idea of figuring at a Birthday in the Peterborough pearls, and making the women die with envy of your fine match—one indeed that I admire you should pretend to."

"You have so insulted me by your conduct, my Lord, that your words are of small importance. Pray, has your Lordship's footman orders to lay hands on me, if I should pass the gate yonder?"

"Be easy, madam. I would put no force on a lady, save such as might give her an excuse for following her inclinations. I never imagined you was one to require that excuse. Indeed, madam, 'twill vastly surprise the gallants of your acquaintance to hear of your virtuous behaviour; you that was so diverting, so free, so obliging a young woman. Had you been a prude now, or a country hoyden, I had respected your innocence, but for you that know the world and jest at it to affect surprise at my design—ha! ha! 'tis very ridiculous."

"I have seen wicked men, my Lord, as I have seen the lions at the Tower, but I no more feared to find 'em among my private friends than I feared to meet a lion in St. James'. O, how have I injured you that you should use me thus shamefully? I own 'twas my folly to love you, but it deserved not this punishment."

"'Tis a lady's privilege to play the victim," returned Mordaunt, relapsing into his more usual sulkiness; and he continued, quite believing his own contention: "I have a better right than you, Miss Molly, to complain of deception. You encourage my love to the utmost, and when its violence makes me take the shortest way to win you, you affect horror and surprise at it. I might believe you merely a finished coquette, were it not for that matter of the money; but that discovers your design."

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"What money?" asked Molly. "What do you mean?"

"Swear you know nought of it, madam. That's writ in your part. But you know enough to understand me when I say there's no victim in the case. You had your design on me, I mine on you. Neither of us has succeeded, and we are quits. But I will be generous and drive you back to Lady Ponsonby's, that you may make your curtsey at the last, and contradict any report that may have got abroad there to your disadvantage."

"I will accept nothing of you, perfidious man," returned she "You may again deceive me. I will return, I will return at once, but not with you. O, I am mad to delay here!"

And before he had fully realized her intention, she had rushed forward, slipped through the iron gate, which was ajar, and disappeared into the darkness of the lane beyond.

When Mordaunt had so suddenly removed his arm from Molly's shoulder, her shawl had come off, having caught in the gold embroidery of his coat, and all the time he had been talking in this very unwonted state of excitement, he had been grasping it mechanically. He scarcely realized he had it till she had gone. He came to the gate and called her name once, but there was no response. He stood there a minute or so staring into the darkness; then the footman got down and opened the door of the chaise. Lord Mordaunt flung him the shawl with a curse, got into the chaise and pulling his hat over his eyes, ordered the coachman to drive to a genteel gaming-house which, late as it was, he had some hopes of finding open.

Chapter XVI.

Esther's expedition to Peterborough House ended more satisfactorily than it had promised to do. That is, the house was thoroughly searched, though without any result beyond the verification of the fact that Molly's shawl had been brought back there by Lord Mordaunt's chaise. She was now anxious to get back to St. James' Street, and Lord Peterborough, who out of complacency towards Francis was now all courtesy, sent a footman to show her the shortest path across Tuthill Fields to the Park. Francis accompanied her a part of the way, but was to return to Peterborough House, as he and his Lordship had certain matters of importance to talk over. The door in the high garden-wall of Peterborough House opened into a thick coppice of hazels overshadowed by taller trees, and the foot-

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path wound for a little through a wilderness of nettles and briars, and such coarse grass as will grow under trees. But very soon it ran into one of the common walks of Tuthill Fields, and here the cousins parted.

While they were walking so far together, Essie had had time to hear how naturally the apparent miracle of Francis' appearance in Peterborough House had occurred. Francis had, with that superfluous discretion that was his foible, respected a wish which Lord Peterborough had expressed early in their acquaintance, and which his Lordship himself had long ago forgotten. In obedience to it he had told the very few friends whom he had left behind him in England no more of his circumstances than that, owing to the unexpected patronage of a nobleman, he had been sent abroad to serve under Prince Eugene, in accordance with his own wishes. As to the nature of his business in England now, and the reason for so sudden and secret an arrival, that he did not at this time confide to Essie. The truth was he was employed as a trusty messenger to bring the last news from St. Germains to Peterborough, who purposed to find him employment in this way so long as the Queen lived, and afterwards to buy him a regiment in England. There was only one other person whose arrival on the scene could have been a greater comfort to Essie, and he was in Berkshire. The twenty months that had passed since Francis Earle left England had transformed him from a somewhat waspish, discontented youth into a man. Essie had had neither sufficient time nor calmness of mind to dwell on the alteration in him, but she felt it. Though the situation was really unchanged, it was with a lightened heart that she walked across the Park and turned up St. James' Street. In her absence Mrs. Harris had been to enquire after Mrs. Vanhomrigh, had gone all over the house to find her cousins, and now came to meet Esther with an ominous face.

"I am pleased to find my Aunt Vanhomrigh better, Cousin Essie; I felt sure Dr. Barker would do her a vast deal of good. I wish I could feel as easy about Cousin Molly; but I have rapped at her door till my knuckles ache, I have shaken it till I was tired, and not a sign has she made."

"O, Molly will sleep like the dead," returned Esther, "and very certainly I shall not waken her."

"I have looked through the keyhole," continued the inexorable Mrs. Harris, "and—well, there's a feeling about the room.

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Believe me, my dear cousin," and here her eyes got very round and her voice very low and emphatic, "believe me, that room is empty."

"It is, Cousin Harris. Here is the key," replied Esther, taking the key out of her pocket. "Now perhaps having gratified your curiosity, you will have the goodness to hold your tongue for the honour of the family, or to say that my sister was seized with a sudden indisposition at the ball last night."

Mrs. Harris, conscious of having said something quite different to several people already, became somewhat red.

"I doubt 'twill be useless. Plenty must have seen the unfortunate creature go off with Lord Mordaunt."

"Did you see her go?" asked Essie. "How do you know she went?"

"How do I know? Lord ha' mercy, cousin, d'ye think I speak without book? Why, his Lordship told me himself. 'Miss Vanhomrigh will so far honour me as to ride home with me,' says he."

"He may not have spoken the truth," replied Essie; "O I wish I knew the truth!"

"I'm very much concerned for you and Aunt Vanhomrigh, and pity you from my soul," said Mrs. Harris, and she spoke sincerely; "but that your little baggage of a sister has run off with the young lord is as plain, as plain as——"

She paused for a comparison, and a voice from behind the door supplied it. "As a prophecy in Mr. Partridge's Almanack; and confound the scurvy event that proves it otherwise."

A voice from the grave could hardly have startled Mrs. Harris more. For all reply she turned round and fell into an attitude of astonishment. For Molly walked in, wrapped in a long shapeless frieze cloak with a hood which covered her head and half her face.

"Molly!" cried Esther, "Oh, where have you been?"

"I have had the foolishest adventure, my dear," replied Molly. "I have been knocked over by a hackney coach, and am scarce in my senses yet I believe." And she threw off her cloak and showed a torn muddy dress, a very pale face with a bright red spot on each cheek and a cut on one, and a bruise on her temple. One arm too was bound up.

"O Moll!" and Essie flew across the room and laid her hands on her sister's shoulders. "Thank Heaven I see thee safe! And I have been to Peterborough House for thee this morning."

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"So you thought I had gone away with Lord Mordaunt!" exclaimed Molly. "And you cried me over Peterborough House! I'll never forgive you."

And she turned and fled upstairs, leaving Esther to get rid of Mrs. Harris. This she did speedily, but whether the lady considered Molly's strange reappearance as a convincing proof of her innocence in the matter of Lord Mordaunt, is exceedingly doubtful. The question was how a young lady who was, or should have been, in a sedan-chair, got run over by a hackney coach, and that unobserved by her friends. The circumstance was suspicious, yet it grew quite naturally out of Molly's adventure with Lord Mordaunt. The way round to the front of the Ponsonby's house from the back lane was, as he had said, much longer and more intricate than it seemed likely to be. When Molly hurried away in the darkness feeling very nervous and quite ignorant of the neighbourhood, she missed the foot-path that would have taken her round to the house. She fled on and on along the high boundary walls of suburban properties, where here and there an oil-lamp over a gateway showed her the miry way she was treading, but never any turning in the desired direction nor any nocturnal wayfarer of whom she might ask her way. She continued walking and running, sometimes stopping to thrust her little silk-stockinged feet further into her shoes, which were limp with mud and the drizzling rain which was beginning to fall, or to draw her petticoats up closer round her, and becoming more and more frightened at the position in which she found herself. At last she reached a high road, which she knew must be some distance from the Ponsonby's, and along which chaises, coaches and chairs were passing at no long intervals. She had now determined to go home as best she could, as even if she could find her way back to the ball, she was not fit to appear there; so she walked along the road in what she took to be the direction of London. Meantime she kept a sharp look-out on the vehicles that passed her and was at last sure she recognized the liveries of a friend on a passing chariot. She ran after it, calling in vain to the coachman to stop, and it was then that she was knocked down and run over by a hackney coach. She lay there bleeding and insensible on the ground, and in these days would certainly have been conveyed to the nearest hospital. In default of that the driver, who was returning home and had no fare, drove her to a small tavern in the neighbourhood kept by a relation of his own. Molly

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remained there at first in a state of insensibility, and afterwards unable owing to her injuries and the lack of hired vehicles, to return home. There was no great alacrity shown by her host or his neighbours to serve the guest so strangely thrown among them, and it was not till a carrier's cart came past the door on its way to the *Belle Sauvage* in Ludgate, that she was able to start on her homeward journey. So it happened that it was past eleven o'clock before she arrived in St. James' Street. Essie got from her only the barest statement of what had occurred. Now that the anger and excitement which had supported her through the adventures of the night had worn off, she was overwhelmed with shame and with misery of mind and body. She lay face downwards on the bed, and after answering shortly the first questions, would make no further response even to Essie's indignant denunciations of Lord Mordaunt, except to cry out that she wished she might never hear his name again, for 'twas Hell to her to hear it. Essie perceiving that she had, though very innocently, offended her sister, called Ann to undress her, and herself set off again to Peterborough House to inform Lord Peterborough and Francis of Molly's return. She would not stay with Mrs. Vanhomrigh, whose questions and gay chatter about Moll would, she felt, even now be intolerable; for though Molly was safe at home again, the insult and the injury that she had received and the scandal most likely to result from the adventure, prevented Esther from enjoying any ease of mind when she thought of her. She might well have waited till Francis arrived, which he had promised to do as soon as possible, but she was glad to find herself an excuse to escape from the house and was in a hurry to tell him what had happened.

She walked quickly across the Park, fearing to be caught in the rain, for the sky was extraordinarily dark; but this darkness, though partly caused by low heavy clouds, also arose partly from the direction of the wind, which was slowly bringing westward a vast deal of black smoke from the chimneys of the City, that something in the upper strata of the air prevented from rising higher and dissipating itself. Londoners were not then used to living in the atmosphere of Hades, and this deepening gloom in the very height of the day seemed strange, almost startling, to Esther. When she turned into the hazel coppice behind Peterborough House, the shadow of the foliage which was thicker than usual at that season, made a kind of dark-green twilight all about her. The way was short from

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thence to the garden-door, and the path ran straight till it came to a kind of small clearing, such as commonly occurs in coppices. That is it was a clearing below, where there were some dozen square yards of bare brown earth, but above it was almost roofed in by the hazels and the meeting boughs of two large ilex trees. Just at this point the path took a turn round a great straggling bush before crossing the open space. Walking fast and absorbed in her own thoughts, Esther was close to this bush before she perceived with a start that there was something unusual passing in the open space beyond it. The day was very still, and as she quickly and silently drew nearer and peered through the leaves, she could not only see but hear the struggle that was proceeding; yet it was in a sense a silent one. There was neither word nor cry audible, only the loud irregular breathing of men wrestling hard for the mastery, the slip or stamp of heavy feet on the sticky earth, and the occasional sound of a severe blow delivered with a heavy hunting-crop. The victim of these blows was Francis Earle. As he came out of the narrow path into the open space, two men had leaped on him from the thicket, and seizing him on either side without giving him the least chance to pull out his sword, held him fast in spite of a desperate resistance. The one on his left, who appeared to be a groom, brought his heavy whip down on the head and shoulders of the young man as hard and as often as he could do so without running the risk of being tripped up, while a powerful negro in a silver collar held him fast on his right. Passively fronting the group and leaning on his walking-cane with his back to Esther, stood a tall graceful figure which she recognized at once as that of Mordaunt. The negro, though going through all the pantomime of strenuous exertion, was perhaps not altogether in earnest; for Francis at one moment succeeded in getting his hand almost to the hilt of his sword. But Mordaunt stepped forward, snatched Francis' rapier out of the scabbard, and with a curse, dug the point into the negro's leg, deep enough to make a clean cut in the stocking and cause the blood to flow down into his shoe.

"Hold on, thou black dog," he said, "till I bid thee leave go, or thine own back shall smart for't, I warrant thee."

Then he threw Francis' weapon on the ground behind him, and returned again to the passive contemplation of his enemy's chastisement and unavailing struggles. Esther had now pressed very close behind him through the straggling bush, though still

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sufficiently hidden by a veil of trailing foliage with which it was overgrown, to escape notice. She had paused in horror and uncertainty what to do, as owing to the morning hour and the threatening weather, Tuthill Fields were deserted, and Peterborough House stood so far back behind its walls and trees that she might have screamed for a long time without attracting the attention of any one there. But when Lord Mordaunt threw away Francis' rapier, it fell at a very little distance from her. Quickly and cautiously Esther took hold of as many of the twigs and trailers before her as she could take at once, so as to pass through them as freely as possible; yet as she sprang through it was with a sound of the cracking of twigs and rending of garments. Fortunately, however, Mordaunt stood too close to her for this noise to warn him in time of her entrance on the scene. Before he could lift a hand to prevent her, she had snatched the fallen rapier from the ground, and rushing on the negro, by the impetus and unexpectedness of her attack caused him to loose his hold of Francis, into whose right hand she immediately thrust his sword. Then was there something like a reversal of fortune in the battle, for Francis, whose quickness of eye and hand made him an excellent swordsman, began to lay about him with such fury that the two servants very soon thought more of escaping unhurt than of obeying orders, and leaping in among the brushwood, disappeared, leaving their master to fight his own battles. If long and successful study of the art of fencing could fit a man to do that, Lord Mordaunt should have been able to do so. He had practised it with real perseverance; but when the bright steel without any button on it began to fly this way and that, he did not do more than draw and make a distant ineffectual thrust or two, shouting angrily to his servants to disarm the rascal. When the groom and the negro had been put to flight, Francis, infuriated, thirsting for revenge and heedless of the consequences, rushed straight upon their master with a deadly look, and Mordaunt felt for the first time the shock of swords crossed in good earnest. Then with the desperate consciousness that his only hope lay in making a cool defence, came the power to make it. That assistance would come before long was more than probable, and meantime pale as death, with head thrown back and dilated eyes intent to follow the fierce, varied, lightning-quick attacks with which his adversary pursued him, he retreated step by step across the little clearing. But just

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as he had almost touched its extreme limit he gave a low but exceeding bitter cry, his sword sprung to the ground, and as he threw forward his left hand and arm to catch at Francis' weapon and shield his body from the coming thrust, a spurt of blood crimsoned his lace cravatte. His cry was scarcely over when it was echoed by a much louder one from the lips of Esther.

"Oh! Don't kill him!" she shrieked, catching Francis' arm.

So for a few seconds the three stood motionless together, Mordaunt with his bloody hand still clutching his opponent's blade, and staring at Francis' frowning face with the horror of death fixed on his own. Then quite suddenly the tension of his nerves and muscles relaxed, his head fell back, he staggered a minute and fell heavily backwards among the hazels.

Esther took hold of him, as though to lift him out of the bushes.

"O Heavens! Do you think he is dead?" she asked.

Francis wiped his brow with a handkerchief and dropped his sword back into its sheath.

"Not he," he replied, and at first he was so hoarse that he could scarcely speak. "I've spoiled his fine hand for him, that's all. Why the devil must he try that old trick with the left?"

And he proceeded very unceremoniously to drag his fallen foe out by the legs and leave him lying on his back on the sticky earth. Esther looked in horror at the gashed left hand and arm.

"'Twas a mercy you did not kill him," she said.

Francis made a face, with a kind of shudder.

"'Twould have been downright murder. I have killed men, as soldiers must, but to kill such a coward wretch as that would be butcher's work. Yet being so blind with anger I might not have stayed my hand in time, had you not caught it; so you have my thanks, Hess, if not his—and thanks too, Essie, for your coming in the nick—you was always quick-witted. You couldn't save me a beating, but you have helped me to my revenge for't—and I won't pretend to be so good a Christian as not to value that extremely."

"O Frank, 'twas a shameful, cowardly deed! See, your coat is split, and your forehead terribly marked."

"No matter, Hess. *He'll* not go boast of my bruises," returned he, with a grim smile at the prostrate figure before him.

Esther kneeling on the ground, began to raise Mordaunt's head and undo his cravatte, but Francis pulled her up impatiently.

"Here's no wound worth naming," he said; "'tis a pretty

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deep swoon he is in; no more than that. Run now to Peterborough House, and bid his own people come to his assistance, and I will go and find a hackney to take us to St. James', for I believe I am no figure to walk with a lady. Make haste—it begins to rain."

The black cloud overhead was lower than before, and as he spoke there was a tossing and whispering in the tree-tops, and even through the sheltering foliage a heavy drop fell on his up-turned face. Esther hurried away to the house and he, after picking up and giving a knock or two to his hat which had suffered in the encounter, walked off in the direction of Tuthill Fields.

Now Lord Mordaunt lay there alone; but not really alone. No sooner had Francis and Esther gone their several ways than the black head of Tully the negro appeared, raised cautiously from behind a bush. When he saw his master stretched out on the ground before him, he stole out and stared at the prostrate figure, and some secret fascination drew him nearer and nearer to it. A negro face is apt to seem an inexpressive thing to an unaccustomed eye, but as Tully looked at Lord Mordaunt the growing ferocity of his gaze was unmistakable. He passed his hand up and down his own leg, where Mordaunt had stabbed it. His mind was filling itself with vengeful memories of other blows, of countless curses and degrading words which had fallen to his lot since Mordaunt owned him. Tully had been kindly brought up in his West Indian home, whence he had been sent as a present to Peterborough's son. His father had been born in the forests of Africa, and a generation of slavery and semi-civilization had not tamed the fierce blood that he inherited from naked warriors whose sport was the death of their foes. There was a strange look of the wild beast about him as he crouched at Mordaunt's side, peering in his face with low guttural noises and hissing whispers. His eyes rolled and glittered, as showing his strong clenched teeth in a grin of rage and hate, he seized a fallen sword, which lay on the ground close to his hand; it was his master's weapon, a strong two-edged rapier. Laying his left hand on the young man's thick, brown hair, Tully drew the sharp edge of the blade lightly across his bared throat. At the touch of the cold steel Lord Mordaunt opened his eyes. For an instant those eyes must have looked at the black face hanging over them, threatening, distorted with mingled passions of hate and terror and revenge, and at the green

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overshadowing boughs beyond it. Then Tully again drew the blade across his throat, this time in savage earnest. Whether the impulse that caused the negro to kill his master originated most in his hate or in his terror at suddenly seeing Mordaunt's eyes open, the deed was done before he could realize the consequences of his act. He remained a minute or two beside the inanimate or almost inanimate body, staring at it in unfeigned horror; his face turned a yellowish colour and his knees knocked together with fear. He did not consider his chances of escaping suspicion; flight was all he thought of. Throwing the blood-stained sword away from him, he felt with trembling fingers in his master's pocket, found his purse, emptied it into his own pouch, then slipped in among the bushes, and vanished again more noiselessly and completely than before. Within ten minutes of the time that Francis and Esther had gone their several ways, Lord Mordaunt was again lying alone. So quickly and silently had all this passed, so little altered the position of the body, that had there been a hidden spectator of the drama, he would almost have supposed it had been a dream; a vision such as some monkish painter might have imagined, showing the foul unlovely spirit that had its habitation in that beautiful form, hanging over it like an emanation before it vanished for ever from the earth and departed to its own place.

The first person who came that way was Francis, who had found a hackney coach at no great distance and driven back in it to Tuthill Fields, where it was waiting. He came leisurely along the path, while the rain pattered on the leaves overhead, and every now and then a large slow drop dripped down on to him. When he came to the bush through which Esther had made her way to his assistance, he saw her tracks, the broken twigs and scattered leaves and a bit of torn sleeve-ruffle hanging on a briar.

He smiled, and declared to himself that any other woman in the world would have done nothing under such circumstances except scream and faint. In which partial belief he erred. So looking through the branches, but full of his own thoughts, it was a minute or two before he noticed that Mordaunt was lying where he had left him. It cannot be said that the fact caused him keen anxiety, but he thought this swoon was lasting a long time and wondered no one had yet arrived from the house. When he came round the bush into the clearing he saw what had happened.

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Meantime Esther had reached Peterborough House and briefly told Lord Peterborough of the fight and its origin. For a nobleman to employ others to beat a man he chose to consider unworthy of his sword, was not so unprecedented a thing that every one would have been equally shocked at it. Lord Peterborough, however, with all his faults was a brave man, and so cowardly a form of retaliation would never have commended itself to him. Now, when the victim was one to whom he was really attached, his indignation was extreme. But that which roused it most of all was that Mordaunt should swoon like a girl at the sight of his own blood, and in general show the white feather. He would not send any one else, but determined to come himself and let his son know his opinion of him, while Adriano was dressing his wound. And all the way as he walked beside Esther, followed by Adriano bearing a bandage and other necessaries, he was calling Heaven to witness how horribly undeserved a thing it was that he should have a chicken-hearted poltroon for his son and for heir to his distinguished name.

The path from the garden-gate ran straight to the clearing, so that while yet a little way off it they could see Francis standing by the side of the body, somewhat turned away from them, with his head sunk on his breast and his arms hanging straight by his side. Esther called to him, and looking round with a start he hurried towards them, holding up his hand to warn them from approaching nearer. He was very much agitated, and this in one who so seldom betrayed agitation, alarmed Esther.

"Stop, Essie," he said, as he came up to them; "this is no place for you."

Then, turning to Peterborough:

"My Lord, your son—your son is—is——"

"Is dead?" asked Peterborough.

Francis made an affirmative sign.

There was a pause, and even in the shadow of the trees the aging face showed a yellow pallor round the patches of paint that Adriano had so cunningly put on.

"Well," he resumed at last, "I have lost other and better sons. I did not suppose the loss of this one would have touched me so nearly—but my race dies with him. Let us proceed."

"No, my Lord," said Francis, laying his hand on Peterborough's arm; "do not go further, do not look at him—at least not yet."

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"Pshaw, boy!" cried Peterborough impatiently, pushing on; "what stuff is this you talk to an old soldier that has seen more dead men than you have seen live ones."

"I know not how he came by his death; there has been foul play, but believe me I do not know," said Francis very earnestly, following him.

Lord Peterborough made no answer, for he was not listening. When he came near enough to see for himself the nature of his son's mortal wound, he started visibly, and going up to the body kneeled down by it, though it was plain that nothing could be done. Then turning his head to look at Francis with an awful sternness, and pointing to the wound:

"How's this, young man?" he asked. "This was never done in honourable fight."

"Oh, my Lord," cried Francis; "before Heaven I cannot tell you. I swear to you that I gave him no greater hurt than that cut across the hand. I left him in a swoon and returning but now, I found him so."

Esther in spite of Francis's prohibition now came up, followed by Adriano. The Italian, who had been in a nobleman's household in his own country before taking service with Lord Peterborough, was used to seeing strange, sometimes frightful things without comment, and stood discreetly aside without any expression of emotion. Esther gave an exclamation of horror and clapped her hands to her eyes. Then, turning to Francis:

"Oh, 'tis too horrible! In God's name, Frank, how could this happen?"

"I know no more than you," he answered, with the kind of impatience that comes from pain of body or mind. His eyes sought the face of Lord Peterborough, who had risen to his feet and was staring gloomily into the bushes straight before him.

"My Lord Peterborough," cried Francis, "do you believe me an assassin? Before Heaven I know no more than the babe unborn how this unhappy man came by his death."

"I cannot tell what to think," returned Peterborough without looking at him; "all men are liars—but if 'twas your hand that did it, then was it a foolish and ungrateful as well as a dishonourable deed."

Francis said nothing but made a gesture of despair strangely passionate for one so self-contained.

"My Lord, my Lord," cried Essie, wringing her hands, "you must believe him; indeed he is no liar and never was one.

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And I saw with my own eyes how he had Lord Mordaunt at his mercy and could have killed him fairly. He spared him then, in hot blood. Can you think he would slaughter him in cold? If you do not know him better than to think so, I do. Pray, my Lord, listen to him, for he speaks nothing but the truth."

Esther in her excitement had forgotten her horror of the dead man, and had actually fallen on her knees at Lord Peterborough's side and taken hold of him to enforce her plea. He turned his head and looked at Francis, and his face softened.

"I *will* believe you, child," he said gravely; "'twould give me too much pain to do otherwise. No—that deed is not yours, but have you no guess who is the assassin?"

Francis kissed the hand that Lord Peterborough stretched out to him, and mournfully shook his head. He then repeated in greater detail the story that Esther had before told, of the assault on himself and the fight with Lord Mordaunt. When Francis had finished:

"I trust this day's work may not cost me yet another son," said Lord Peterborough. "But it seems but too likely that when the servants yonder luckless boy employed against you find he is dead, they will accuse you. Since the Duke of Hamilton's death the magistrates have been waiting to make an example of some gentleman who has been unlucky enough to kill his adversary, and has not too powerful friends at his back. And, alas! child, with what decency could I publicly protect you in this matter?—Besides, if it be enquired into, we cannot pass it off as a duel, it having happened without witnesses except this lady—especially the wound being as it is."

All this and more had passed through Francis' mind in the short interval that had elapsed between his finding the body and the arrival of Peterborough and Esther.

"If you'll but believe me innocent, my Lord," he replied, "I'll bear the rest. But what had I best do?"

Peterborough thought a minute.

"Go home with Miss Vanhomrigh; my people will have no clue to your whereabouts. If it appears that I cannot hush the matter up, then I will so contrive it that you leave England this night."

Calling Adriano in Italian to bind up and conceal the dead man's wound as much as was practicable, Peterborough drew Francis away in the direction of Tuthill Fields. When they got out into the fields, they found that the rain was finer than when

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it first began to fall, but thicker and more penetrating. It was not possible to see very far, and there was no one in sight when they reached the hackney coach. Lord Peterborough himself gave the orders to the coachman, lest he should look at Francis too closely, and with a consoling observation to the effect that Adriano could not speak English comprehensibly and could hold his tongue in Italian, he sent Esther and Francis rolling off to St. James' Street.

About half-past eight o'clock in the evening Lord Peterborough arrived there himself, wrapped in a great frieze Joseph and wearing a hat and wig as unlike his usual ones as possible. He was carrying a few necessaries for Francis with his own hands, not choosing to be followed to the house even by Adriano. He told them that of the two servants employed to beat Francis one, a negro slave, had taken the opportunity to run away, and his Lordship thought it more prudent under the circumstances to bear the loss than to advertise for him, especially if Miss Vanhomrigh thought it probable he had recognized her. The groom had stated that he would not know the lady again who had so suddenly interfered in Francis' favour, but was positive he would know the young man himself, and that there was no doubt 'twas he had killed Lord Mordaunt, whether by accident or by intention. A footman, who had been standing under the grand staircase when Mordaunt passed down it from Lord Peterborough's apartments, although he had not heard all that Francis had then said to Mordaunt, had distinctly caught the words—"I'll kill you if I can," pronounced, as he affirmed, in a very threatening manner. Moreover in spite of Adriano's careful bandaging, it was rumoured in the household that Mordaunt's death-wound was not such as could possibly have been given in the course of an honourable encounter. It was plain there had been foul play. Lord Peterborough was now sure that Francis must leave England at once and for a long time, if not for ever. He gave him the choice between sailing that night for France, where he might wait for the return of James III. or take service in a foreign army, or getting on board a ship in which Peterborough had a share, which was sailing before morning for the American Plantations. The captain was an old and tried adherent of Peterborough's, and his Lordship had an estate in the American Colonies, or Plantations, as they were still called. There he believed that he could very handsomely provide for Francis, whom he desired to pass under the

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name of Mordaunt, and himself reap some benefit from his presence there. Yet Lord Peterborough was very loth to part with him. The young man had but a few minutes in which to decide his future, and somewhat to his Lordship's surprise he chose America. For though he was a soldier he was something else besides, and if he could not serve in the English army, he would not serve in another. Perhaps a soldier's life had not proved so satisfactory as he had expected, perhaps he had seen something of adventurers serving in foreign armies, and after his critical manner thought meanly both of them and of their career. As to James III., though his loyalty and gratitude to Lord Peterborough made him willing, as he would have said, to act as special messenger to the devil for that nobleman, if so desired, he would have been sorry and surprised to see the return of the injured Monarch. He had been used to keep the festival of the Battle of the Boyne as a schoolboy, and even if he had been disposed to turn Jacobite afterwards, his late visit to St. Germains would have sent him back to the principles of his youth. But it must be admitted that before deciding, he asked his Lordship if there was not sometimes soldiering to be done out in the Plantations, and hearing that the Indians and the French were often very troublesome, made up his mind to go there; yet without any eagerness, for he was greatly depressed both at the part he had innocently taken in the death of Lord Peterborough's heir, and at his own sudden and indefinite banishment from England. He would gladly have stayed awhile, not merely for his own sake, but because he perceived from what Essie told him that the Vanhomrigh ladies were socially and pecuniarily in straits, and that if he could not materially help them, his presence would be a comfort and relief to them, especially to her. She had tried to dissuade him from seeing Mrs. Vanhomrigh, declaring that her mother was not well enough to hear the story of his encounter with Mordaunt or its cause, and could not safely be trusted with a secret. But he insisted upon it that he could not be in Cousin Vanhomrigh's house without seeing her, and made her promise with some pride to maintain secrecy on the subject of his visit, because he was in town on a political mission. It perhaps somewhat reconciled him to leaving England to learn that Swift was there, and frequenting the family as usual, though in the country for the moment. Mrs. Vanhomrigh knew fifty good reasons why the Dean had so long postponed formally pro-

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posing for the hand of Esther, and could almost fix the exact date when he would do so. Francis, who had heard all this of old, put no particular faith in it, but he knew that if things were still in the same position as before he would have to content himself with taking a subordinate place in Essie's regard, and suffer again the old repressed hatred of the Doctor; a hatred which was partly jealousy and partly a natural aversion which he would have felt under any circumstances. He had found it distinctly pleasanter to be far away, and too fully interested and occupied to be very sensible of his own loves and hates. Yet for a little while he might have been happy with them, his oldest, almost his only friends in the world, and serviceable to them, had it not been for his misadventure of that morning.

The three, Peterborough, Esther and Francis, were mostly silent as they walked along the deserted dripping Mall in the dusk of the summer evening in the direction of Westminster stairs. At the top of the stairs was a bench where a number of watermen sat, some dozing, some smoking and some playing cards by the light of a lantern; villainous-looking men, mostly wearing loose blouses, the skirts of which hung down beneath their waistcoats, no coats, and caps on their unkempt locks. A fare on such an evening was a strange and welcome sight, and there was a commotion among them, some dozen men jumping up at once and shouting, "Oars, Sir?"—"Sculls, your honour?"—"Sculls or oars, gentlemen?" Peterborough bespoke a couple of oars, and while a dirty-looking and foul-mouthed waterman was hailing his boat and the comrade who shared it with him, Francis and Esther stood together on the bank.

"It is very hard to lose you thus, Francis," said she. "It was a wonderful comfort to me to see you this morning."

He sighed, and made no answer.

"All this will pass over; Lord Peterborough is set on hushing it up. Meanwhile, you must write us how you do. I do not love to think you are going to so savage a country."

"I shall return," he replied; "I will return. You have but to send for me when I can be of service, and I will certainly come. Mordaunt will soon be forgotten and I yet sooner."

"I trust it may be so," she said. "In any case, dear generous cousin, we shall not forget you—nor cease to be sorry that you suffer through us, for it is through us."

"No, Hess; do not continue to say that," he cried impatiently.

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"'Tis a mere cursed trick of the jade Fortune. I care not—I will be even with her somehow, and you shall see me return.—That is, if you wish to see me."

"Come, child," Peterborough called out; "the oars are ready. Make your adieux as tenderly as you will, but briefly. I'll not count the kisses."

"My service to Cousin Vanhomrigh and Moll, and I trust they will soon be in health," said Francis, and raised Esther's hand to his lips. She kissed him hastily on the forehead, both gentlemen paused and made their bows to her at the top of the stairs, then by the flickering light of the boatman's lantern, she saw Peterborough push Francis into the boat before him, throw money to a man who was holding the boat up to the landing-place with a hook, and sign to him to let go. In less than a minute the dark boat disappeared in the darker shadow of the bridge; its lantern gleamed there for a moment, and was gone. Old Ann had followed the party at a little distance and now joined Esther, who went home to St. James' Street as quickly as she could, oppressed with a sense of desertion, and very melancholy.

(*To be continued.*)

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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF FOUR RUSSIANS.

THE death of the Grand Duke Nicolas, brother of the late and uncle of the present Emperor of Russia, together with the fact that his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, is stricken down with a malady which affords no hope of his recovery, recalls to the public mind two distinguished men whose names are associated with the most prominent political and military events in Russia of recent years. This paper will be confined simply to a few personal reminiscences of these two men, and of two other eminent Russians, the one distinguished by his valour in the field, the other by his diplomatic notoriety.

The elder of the two Grand Dukes, Constantin-Nicolaïévitch, was born in 1827, and is consequently, at the present writing, sixty-four years of age. Chief among his various titles are those of Grand Admiral, Aide-de-Camp General and President of the Imperial Council. In these capacities he has rendered distinguished services to his Government; but his unconcealed sympathies with the Liberal party, and especially with the people of Poland, created, on more than one occasion, a friction between the Grand Duke and his illustrious father. These, and other circumstances more or less known to the public, have rendered his political and private life not altogether a bed of roses.

When I first knew him he was on a visit to his daughter at Athens, Queen Olga, and the impressions, then and subsequently, which he made upon me were those of a singularly well-informed mind, widely awake to the political and social movements of the world at large, and eagerly active in the pursuit of information from all with whom he came in contact. Free from the slightest shadow of hauteur; dignified, yet familiar, with all whom he cared to converse with; inquisitive, at times jocose; full of

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information, and ready to impart it beyond the verge of strict diplomatic reticence, I always looked forward to a meeting with His Highness, well assured that I should gain something from the interview beyond the empty banalities which generally form the subject of conversation between high personages and their inferiors in position. I also felt, that whether the interview was to be a mere exchange of daily compliments or the expression of views upon current topics, I must keep my wits about me, so sudden and unexpectedly might be the question or the remark to which I was called upon to respond.

As an example of this, His Highness on one occasion abruptly turned from the subject under discussion and asked where a certain vessel of the United States navy was then stationed. I could not at the moment answer the question, but promised to consult the last naval report and let him know. The vessel in question was not in the European squadron, and I had not heard of her movements for a long time. He was greatly surprised at my want of information on the subject, and declared that, with that one exception, he could name the whereabouts of every vessel in the American and European service. I ventured to put his statement to the test; whereupon His Highness called off on his fingers vessel after vessel, their respective sizes, armaments and present stations, until, no longer incredulous, I cried, "enough." He seemed equally conversant with matters totally disconnected with those under his especial charge, and at the mention of a name prominent in diplomacy or in letters would pronounce an acute criticism upon, or give an apt illustration of the individual named, as if he had made his characteristics a profound study.

That a man of such diversified resources could turn with facility from the grave occupations of his official position to the childish amusements of life, when such diversions were appropriate to the occasion, is not astonishing. I remember at a country picnic given by their Majesties to the members of the Court and diplomatic circle who were passing the summer at the Island of Corfu, the Grand Duke Constantin, leaving his official dignity to take care of itself at St. Petersburg, was the leading spirit in the romping games on that summer afternoon in a lovely and secluded spot a few miles from the town. He had a pleasant word and a quiet little joke for everybody, and when he engaged in a race or paid his penalty in a game of forfeits, one might have supposed him, from his dexterity and agility, to be one of the

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youngest, instead of one of the oldest of the party. During a pause in the amusements, His Highness proposed to run up to the top of a steep little peak of rock in the vicinity to see the view, and called to the King, and myself who chanced to be near him, to follow. This we did, and in a few minutes we were upon the summit; but, the space being too limited for three to stand at a time, we were obliged to cling to each other to maintain our equilibrium. "Never mind," said the Grand Duke, "here we stand, the representatives of three nations, and from this eminence we can defy the world!" Scarcely were the words uttered than we illustrated the fallacy of "ambition's boast," for the foot of one of the party slipped, and the triple alliance came to an abrupt dissolution, the *sauve qui peut* movement backwards down the declivity being accentuated by the ludicrous attempts of each to save his dignity and his nose from falling on the slippery rock.

His brother, the Grand Duke Nicolas Nicolaïévitch, presented a somewhat different type of character. Without the excitable and nervous temperament of Constantin, genial but grave in his deportment, soldierly in bearing, as befits the position he held, he inspired in his intercourse with others a feeling of deference and dignified regard. Born in 1831, he was four years the junior of his brother. His principal titles were General of Engineers, Aide-de-Camp, Inspector-General of the Army, and President of the *Comité Suprême d'Organisation*. Of late years his name has come prominently forward as Commander-in-Chief during the Russo-Turkish war.

It was at Constantinople in 1878 that, being engaged in the prosecution of an important matter of business with the Ottoman Government, it became necessary for me to have an interview with the Grand Duke. The Russo-Turkish war was over; the city of the Sultan lay weakened and humiliated at the feet of her great Northern conqueror, and the streets of Pera, the Christian quarter of the city, were gay with the uniforms of Russian officers, who enlivened the Grand Rue with their presence and enriched the shopkeepers at the bazaar in Stamboul with Russian roubles in exchange for *bric-à-brac*, Turkish carpets, and Oriental embroideries. 120,000 Russian troops were encamped at San Stefano, a Turkish village an hour's distance by rail from Stamboul, and the English fleet, "of observation," despatched thither to prevent, if need be, the occupation of the capital by the Russian army, lay at anchor in Bessika Bay, at, relatively, the same distance from Stamboul as were the Russian troops. In

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the Bosphorus, midway between the European and Asiatic shores, the *Lavadia*, a magnificent yacht floating the imperial flag of Russia, lay peacefully at her anchorage. On board of her was the Grand Duke Nicolas, then in command of the Russian army in Turkey.

Ascertaining that H. I. H. generally lunched on board his yacht at noon, I proceeded thither in a *caïque*, an hour later, bearing a letter of introduction to him from Prince Labanoff, the Russian Ambassador. As I stepped on deck I thought I had never seen a more elegant specimen of the yacht class of naval architecture and appointments than the *Lavadia* presented. Everything, of course, was spick and span, from topmast to water's edge, but the broad sweep of the main deck, the oiled and shining spars, the ivory-white panelling and the burnished brass mountings on cannon, capstan and railing, presented an *ensemble* which could not be well surpassed. The officer at the gangway stated that the lunch party were still at table, but that, the repast being over, he thought the Grand Duke would see me, and he took my letter and card to the cabin. Almost immediately he returned with a message from His Highness inviting me to join him at table. This I declined, with thanks, sending him word that, as my business was of a private character, I would be pleased to know when it would perfectly suit his convenience for me to call again. This was answered by the Grand Duke in person who, greeting me with extreme cordiality, renewed his invitation to go down with him below, saying that no one but his staff officers were present and that we could converse at our ease. As I was disinclined to do so, he said:—"All right; let us sit down here, then," namely on the raised edge of the poop deck, our feet resting on the deck below. "Here we shall be entirely uninterrupted," he continued, "and I've nothing to do for an hour to come. I am always glad to see one of your countrymen. Now, what can I do for you?" Then he ordered coffee and cigars and awaited my communication.

This all looked very encouraging, but I was by no means sure that he would be inclined to afford me the information I desired; first, because it related to the disposition of certain Turkish territory acquired by the Russians among the spoils of war, and which, not being fully determined upon, it might not be prudent to divulge; and, secondly, because the business I had in hand concerned *English* interests, and it was hardly presumable that, under the then strained relations between the two countries,

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Russia would care to show her hand until the political arrangements in view were fully matured. In this opinion,—so far as the Grand Duke's revelations to myself were concerned,—I was altogether mistaken. With perfect frankness he answered my questions, fully and without reserve, simply making it a condition that until the arrangements were made public I would consider his communication as strictly confidential. When this matter was disposed of, I rose to leave, but at H. H.'s request, I remained for another half hour, the conversation drifting into matters concerning the late war and the present condition of political affairs. It would appear as if,—glad to be free for a few moments from the restraint of official routine, and the conventional intercourse imposed upon him by the foreign and uncongenial elements by which he was surrounded,—he welcomed the opportunity of a free and unrestrained conversation with one who was entirely independent of political prejudices and international questions such as then formed the chief topic of interest, in Constantinople, from the Sultan's palace to the booth of the humblest shopkeeper. He seemed annoyed that he was not receiving from the English colony at Pera that official attention which his position deserved, and especially at the cold shoulder turned to him by the British Ambassador.

"Why does he not call upon me?" he asked, in an irritable tone. "Is Russia at war with England? Did we not enter upon this campaign only after every effort on the part of the Conference of the Powers failed to bring Turkey to accept a single proposition which would have averted it? It was perfectly well known that the folly and obstinacy of the Turks would result in war, and that not a single Power would come to her aid. We have conducted the war with the greatest moderation and prudence, being careful not to wound the susceptibilities of England. Are we here with sinister intentions, or as a victorious army making peace on honourable terms?"

I asked him why he did not enter Stamboul and make his terms there; he had the precedent of the Prussian occupation of Paris.

"Oh, we had precedent enough," he replied, "but it would have set all Europe in a blaze."

I asked the Grand Duke if it were true that but for the approach of the English fleet to Constantinople, the treaty of peace would have been made at Adrianople.

"Not *at* Adrianople but near there, where the army halted.

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When the news reached us of the approach of the fleet, we met this menace on the part of a friendly Power by advancing the troops ; and should have entered Stamboul, had not the fleet withdrawn, by arrangement, to its present position at Bessika Bay." *

I referred to the prevalent notion that Russia is aiming at the possession of Constantinople. His Highness smiled, and asked :

"Are the United States aiming at the possession of Cuba ? "

"No."

"Would they willingly allow any other Power to hold it ? "

"Certainly not."

"Very well ; that is precisely our position with respect to Constantinople. While things remain as they are—save and excepting the closure of the Dardanelles to the passage of our naval vessels—a condition which no other nation similarly situated would endure, Russia is satisfied. If Constantinople is destined, like an over-ripe pear, to fall into somebody's lap, both the geographical and physical conditions of Russia forbid that, in such an event, it should belong to any other Power. There is of course a party in Russia favourable to the acquisition of Constantinople, as in your slavery days there was a party anxious for the possession of Cuba, but it is not an influential party. Constantinople could not become the southern capital of Russia without causing an immense depreciation of values in the north ; a fact which the land and property owners there would view with the greatest alarm."

"How about the claims of Greece to her ancient domain ? " I ventured to ask.

"They are more sentimental than practical. Greece deserves, and will doubtless obtain in time, an extension of territory. We feel a good deal of sympathy with Greece, apart from the fact of the Greeks being our co-religionists."

I turned the conversation to India.

"India ? There is another popular fallacy, giving rise to the most absurd *espionage* on the part of England, and affording the opportunity from Members of Parliament down to newspaper scribblers, to indulge in speculations and in warnings as to the supposed aggressive movements of Russia in that direction. This causes a good deal of amusement to our people ; but unfortunately it goes beyond this and excites retaliation—and so the

* This statement was confirmed by two Russian Ambassadors—Ignatieff and Labanoff—and by General Skobeleff, whom I separately questioned on the subject.

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breach widens. India! What do we want of that enormous empire of Hindoos and Mussulmans, and which would require a standing army of Russians to keep them from revolt? No; our line of advance is in a different direction, and then only so far as our political interests demand it. The Russian Empire is large enough, and no English statesman, whose judgment is not blinded by prejudice, sincerely believes that Russian ambition seeks the acquisition of India."

When I took my leave of the Grand Duke it was with the conviction that his observations were honestly made, with no concealed purpose of their being repeated for political effect, and that they reflected the opinions of the governing classes in Russia. I have often conversed with leading Russians, introducing myself these topics, and have found similar views expressed in all quarters.

Sitting at breakfast one morning in the Club House at Pera, I noticed at another table Mr. MacGavan, the well-known American newspaper correspondent, who had accompanied the Russian army through the campaign, and had achieved a high reputation for personal valour as well as for remarkable ability as a graphic describer of events. His companion at table was a military officer in uniform, who, when I exchanged bows with MacGavan, turned towards him as if asking who I was. In a few moments both gentlemen rose, and, coming to my table, MacGavan presented me to General Skobeleff. He was a man I greatly desired to meet. The valour and splendid military renown of the hero of Plevna were in everybody's mouth, and he possessed a personal magnetism that won for him the friendship of friend and foe alike. A thorough soldier, his face informed one at the first glance that he was open as the day in his sentiments and democratic in his instincts. As to the men under his command, it would be difficult to say whether military respect or personal love for their commander proved the stronger motive for their admiration of him. A strict disciplinarian in camp, he had a friendly word or grasp of the hand for each and all of them. He did not *talk* to his men of personal bravery, but he set so conspicuous an example of it in his own fearless exposure to danger, that his officers were more nervously anxious for his safety than for their own.

A few days after, we met again by chance at the club house, and Skobeleff, being alone, insisted upon my breakfasting with him, and ordered two or three bottles of champagne. In vain I protested that at that early hour I never drank champagne, but

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he would have it, and drank it like water, without the slightest perceptible effect. This is a Russian habit, and in Skobeleff's case, I fear, led to excesses not altogether disconnected with his untimely death after his return to Russia. Like all his countrymen whom I have known, he talked with the utmost freedom. On military and political affairs he gave his opinions without reserve, and censured certain high officials among his countrymen to an imprudent degree. But even his censorious remarks left the impression on my mind that he spoke from conviction and not from personal feeling. He pressed me to visit him in camp at San Stefano, and offered to send a mounted escort and horses to meet me on my arrival at the railway station.

This honour I declined; but I went down to see him in the course of the week, and was treated with great hospitality. I arrived in the afternoon, and just before nightfall he took me over the camp. The men were preparing their evening meal around huge smoking cauldrons; others were lying about at ease on the turf or in the tents. At the General's approach they started to their feet and stood at "salute," motionless as statues. With a pleasant word to them, he passed on to show me the arrangements for the night. I expressed my surprise at the height of many of the men.

"Oh, *these* are nothing," he replied; "come this way," and we advanced to a group of men sitting in a tent. These he called out by name—"Strogenoff," "Polinoff," and so on—to stand up; and a file of men stood before us, not one of whom was less than six feet two. The appearance of this vast camp of soldiers "off duty," lying, standing, sitting about in groups, some sleeping in the oddest attitudes, or stretched out on their backs, open-mouthed and snoring, in their war-stained and weather-beaten uniforms, their sun-browned faces giving evidence of the toil and hardships of the campaign, was in some respects more impressive than when, a few days after this visit in the lurid light of the evening, I saw them in the blaze of noonday pass in review in all the perfection of thorough equipment and discipline.

The last communication I had with Skobeleff was a note in Paris, regretting that he could not dine with me as he had been suddenly summoned to St. Petersburg. On his arrival he was called to account for his "imprudent if not dangerous pro-Slavic speeches" at public assemblies. Skobeleff was of so frank and honest a nature; so utterly indifferent to public opinion, and imbued with so keen a sense of the claims of humanity in their

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widest significance, that he scorned the restraints of diplomatic reticence. What he felt to be a private or public injustice to others, cost what the avowal might to himself, he felt bound to declare and denounce.

There is a good deal of mystery concerning his death. It has been attributed to natural causes, but Madame Adam, the well-known French *feuilletoniste*, in her monograph of Skobeleff declares that there exists evidence to prove that he was garotted by German enemies.

The most notable diplomatist during my sojourn at Constantinople was General Count Ignatieff, a man of surprising acuteness of mind, a keen observer of events before and behind the political curtain, and who concealed his wonderful sagacity under an open frankness of speech which led to the universal opinion that he was totally unreliable for any statement he made on political affairs. The opinion generally held was that what he said might be perfectly true or utterly false, certainly the latter if it related to any matter in which Russia was practically concerned. The consequence was, that the gravest blunders were frequently made by those who acted on this principle. Ignatieff was perfectly aware of the reputation he bore in this respect, and pretended to be excessively amused at it. He always asserted that he had no secrets, and was as candid and out-spoken as a child. "My fault is," he once said to me, "that I speak *too* plainly, and my excellent colleagues do not like it and so do not believe it. But the Turks believe me and know that I tell them the truth."

Ignatieff was so wonderfully in advance of his colleagues in obtaining "State secrets" at the Sublime Porte, and profiting therefrom, that he excited no little jealousy in political circles. He was never, I believe, caught napping but once, and then the whole diplomatic body, as well as the public at large, were in the same oblivious condition. That was when the populations of Stamboul and Pera were suddenly aroused one morning at day-break by the firing of signal-guns in front of the Sultan's palace at Dolma-Baghtchi, announcing the fact to the world at large that, during the night, Abdul Aziz had been deposed by the Grand Vizir and his ministers, and Prince Murad enthroned in his place. So cleverly and expeditiously had the conspirators carried out and consummated the plot, that none were more profoundly astonished and mystified at this grand political *coup* than the Foreign Ambassadors, from whom all knowledge of the design had been dexterously concealed.

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Being on excellent personal terms with the Russian Ambassador, and outside the circle of diplomatic intrigue, I was often indebted to him for very early and sometimes very interesting information. One day, as I was passing by the gate of the Embassy, I met Ignatieff coming out.

"What do you think," he asked, "of the condition of the Turkish finances?"

"As bad as can be," I replied.

"No; they can be worse. Come in, and I will explain."

Taking me into his sanctum, he sat down at his writing-table, and with pencil and paper proceeded to prove by figures that the treasury could not possibly provide for the overdue payments to the army, navy, and civil service, letting alone the interest on the foreign debt. Assuming the revenue to be sixteen million of Turkish pounds and the indebtedness to be twenty-six million, he asked how the deficiency was to be made up. I reminded His Excellency that this was an old story, and that the depleted condition of the treasury was the normal state of affairs, but that, by hook or by crook, the Government at the eleventh hour had always been able to tide over its embarrassments by a recourse to temporary loans.

"From whom?" he asked. "England has been duped long enough, and will not lend another shilling, and there is not a security left to obtain a loan upon from Jew or Greek in Constantinople. Do you know what will happen? The Turks will repudiate the next six months' interest on the foreign bonded debt."

The impressive tone in which he made this announcement inclined me to believe that it was not a calculation on paper upon which he founded this alarming prophecy, and that he knew more than he chose to reveal. I asked if he were stating an opinion or a fact.

"It is my opinion," he answered, "but you will find that I am right."

I then asked if I might communicate his opinion to others.

"To any one you choose; but I tell you beforehand that nobody will believe me."

And nobody did. Of the two individuals to whom I thought the matter worth repeating, one, an ambassador, expressed surprise that I should attach any importance to information from such a source; the other, a prominent banker who negotiated an enormous amount of Turkish bonds, laughed in derision, and

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remarked that my informant's chief characteristic was mendacity. "As to the bonded interest, it would be punctually paid, as it always had been and always would be."

In less than the time mentioned by Ignatieff, the Government declared its inability to pay the semi-annual interest, and down went the market value of all Turkish "securities."

"What did I tell you?" said Ignatieff, pulling up his horse as I met him on the road between Therapia and Buyukdera. "Was I not right? Now I will tell you another thing. They will not pay the other half! You will see—you will see!" and off rode the Ambassador, chuckling with satisfaction at the success of his prophecy, or the discomfiture of the bondholders, or both.

I informed my two incredulous friends of this second "opinion" of the astute diplomatist, but they indignantly refused to believe in the "other half." They had come to the conclusion that Ignatieff himself had persuaded the Government to this suicidal course in order to give another shake to the rickety throne of the Sultan, and that he was probably speculating in the funds. As to the crisis, they believed it would be temporary, and that the public credit would soon be restored.

In due time the repudiation—for such it amounted to—of the second half-year's interest followed, and down to lower depths than ever went the Turkish bonds. The blind belief in the good faith of the Government was never more rudely dispelled, nor the ignorance of credulous bondholders more severely exposed. To use the words of a certain Turkish Pasha, who was discussing with me the situation of affairs—one of the few who spoke English and who had acquired in England some practical acquaintance with the principles of political economy—"The Turks have sucked the English orange dry, and have thrown the skin in their faces."

Many anecdotes of General Ignatieff's cunning in diplomacy were current in Constantinople. I am not sure that I did not have the following from his own lips. The late Sultan Abdul Aziz, if not absolutely mad was sufficiently eccentric to cause constant irritation, not only to his ministers but to the Foreign Ambassadors. At one time he refused absolutely to grant an audience to any of the members of the diplomatic body, and this at a time when many of them, including the Russian Ambassador, were waiting anxiously for interviews. Ignatieff ascertained that, under the plea of official occupation, the Sultan was spending the greater part of his time in cock-fighting, an

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amusement which he greatly relished. He further ascertained that His Imperial Majesty was in want of fresh birds to supply the places of those killed in fight. Thereupon Ignatieff procured a fine-looking white fowl of the farmyard species, had it trimmed and spurred to resemble a game-cock, and sent it in a richly-decorated cage to the Sultan, with the respectful compliments of the Russian Ambassador. The ruse was successful. His Majesty, who at first was delighted with the gift, soon sent for the Ambassador to present himself at the palace, and explain, if he could, why the bird had no fight in him. Ignatieff went, and in the presence of the Sultan examined the bird, and with, of course, immense astonishment and regret, acknowledged that it was quite unable to cope with His Majesty's superior gamecocks. A conference followed on the subject of gamecocks in general and this one in particular, and when the diplomatist had succeeded in drawing the Sultan into a conversational mood, he adroitly introduced the political matter he had so long awaited an opportunity to bring before His Majesty. Ignatieff returned to his embassy triumphant over his colleagues, who were left out in the cold.

This reference to the late Sultan Abdul Aziz recalls an amusing incident, with which I will close these off-hand recollections. During a "Grand Council" of ministers at the Sublime Porte, and in the midst of the discussion on a subject of vital importance, a mounted messenger from the palace arrived, bearing an imperial order to the Grand Vizir to wait upon His Majesty without an instant's delay. The council broke up, and the Grand Vizir proceeded to the palace in hot haste. There he was informed that the Sultan was in the garden impatiently awaiting his arrival. As he entered, he saw His Majesty standing with a few attendants intently watching a fight between two gamecocks. The Grand Vizir, following the custom of all Turkish subjects when approaching the august presence, stopped at a respectful distance and commenced the series of salaams with downcast eyes and shrinking attitude appropriate to the occasion.

"Never mind that now," exclaimed His Majesty excitedly, "but come here directly. Look—see—what did I tell you? Did I not say that *Acmet*"—pointing to one of the cocks—"would whip *Assam*? Look, he is doing it!"

And this was what, and all, the Sultan had to communicate to his Grand Vizir.

CHARLES K. TUCKERMAN.

FLORENCE, ITALY.

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A WINTER JAUNT TO NORWAY.

BY MRS. ALEC TWEEDIE.

NORWAY in winter! Yes, Norway in winter. Norway covered with snow and ice; its rivers, fjords, waterfalls and lakes all frozen; its mountains cloaked with purest snow; its people swathed in fur.

When securing our tickets for this distant land, the clerk laughed at the idea of two ladies going at all, as none but commercial travellers ever ventured there between October and May.

Nothing daunted, we (my sister and I) paid our money and left the office with the repeated assurance from the clerk that the Kiel-Korsör route was re-opened after the long-continued ice-block.

Arrived at Victoria, our luggage safely registered (for the small sum of fourpence, the whole journey to Christiania, a distance of about 1300 miles), we had taken our seats in a first-class carriage and were quietly chatting, when two men suddenly arrived, almost breathless, at the door.

"Are you the ladies who have registered for Christiania?" enquired the strange men.

"Yes," I replied.

"I'm very sorry, madam, but we have just received news not to book you through."

Was this a case of mistaken identity? Were they detectives, or what?

"Why not?" I enquired.

"Because it is wired that Kiel is again closed by ice, he replied.

We breathed again. It was all right, and yet it was all wrong. What were we to do? Risk being turned back from Kiel we certainly would not, so out of the train we jumped, and just succeeded in securing our luggage before the Flushing mail left the platform.

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In calmer moments we learnt that a wire had been received by the railway officials not to book further than Hamburg, and, as they imagined ice must be the cause, they thought it right to let us know.

Before leaving the station we telegraphed to friends in Hamburg, Copenhagen, and Christiania, with the result that the following morning we received three wires to say the route, after all, was open, so we started that night.

Few English people are aware of the dangers and difficulties experienced by the boats that traverse the Baltic during the winter.

For nearly a month the great German naval station of Kiel had been so completely ice bound, that no vessel had been able to enter or leave its harbour; but the moment the milder weather set in, an artificial passage had been made in the ice by the explosive aid of dynamite.

Making this passage-way through the ice had cost the town of Kiel nearly 10,000 marks, although the work had been done by a regiment of marines under the superintendence of their own officers. A series of small wooden buckets were filled with a certain amount of the explosive, and then placed in a straight line on the ice, at intervals of about 300 feet. All were connected by a metallic wire, when a single electric spark was sufficient to explode them, and what had been a solid sheet of ice was in a moment rent asunder. Once the passage was completed—a matter of some days' work—ice-breakers were continually employed up and down the channel to keep it open.

Kiel is not likely soon to forget the severity of the winter of 1890–91.

Like all the Baltic boats, those running between Kiel and Korsör in winter are specially built to encounter ice, and consequently are not beautiful in shape or large in size, though admirably suited for the purpose.

We were terribly late in starting from Kiel, for the parcel-post had been so long interrupted (over a month), there were an unusually large number of packets. This was only the second day, the boat was able to cross. The parcels were quite a sight. They filled the hold, they covered the deck—they were everywhere. There were parcels of every shape, and every size.

At last they were all arranged on board, and a curious cracked old bell warned us we were really off on our adventurous voyage.

The whole arm of the sea had been one frozen mass, right

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down the middle of which there was now a channel. Although this passage itself was fairly open, on either side a field of ice still remained, over which we could have walked or driven to the shore. Crack, crack, crack went the floating masses of ice on every side as the ship ploughed its way through them. The cracking sound was exactly like the breaking of china, though of course much louder. It was beautiful to watch the wash from the steamer; oftentimes the blocks of ice were quite raised from the water, and balanced for a moment in the air, only to return with a plunge beneath the surface of the water, and rise again in a moment to join the vast floating mass.

We passed a lighthouse surrounded by acres of ice, and the lighthouse men were pulling their boat as if it were a sledge over the frozen mass, gaily singing the while. All were well protected from the cold, wearing not only fur caps, but huge fur collars, which completely covered their ears.

Gradually we emerged from the floating ice and sped along briskly through the open sea. Every one went to lunch, and we were quietly enjoying a fairly well-served meal, when, with a terrific bang and crash, the whole ship quivered from stem to stern under the effects of a collision. What could it be? Of course there was an immediate rush on deck. Then the mystery was explained, for, lo and behold! we had run into, and were entirely surrounded by a floe of unbroken ice. Imagine the sudden disappearance of the whole sea, and nothing but solid ice left in its stead!

That such an encounter had not been expected we soon learned, and that it was a moment of some peril we soon saw, from the anxious faces of the four men on the bridge, who incessantly used their glasses in the hope of discovering an opening through which we might steer with safety.

So extensive was this ice-field, reaching as far as the eye could see, it seemed as if it would be impossible to penetrate it. The steamer was coated with metal, and her bow was so arranged with a curious upturned knife that, as she "skated" on to the ice, if one might use such a term, she broke the frozen mass. These huge broken masses, often thirty or forty feet big and two or three feet deep, rose up on either side of her like veritable walls, and as she passed on, closed in behind her again, until we saw no sea, nothing but ice, ice, ice on every side. Our ship literally trembled in the process, while the sound of the cracking mass was quite bewildering.

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We stopped, reversed engines, and plunged into the ice again. The sensation was extraordinary; but where the frozen mass was very thick, this proved the only way of making any impression on it. This process was often repeated, and so successfully, that in about two hours and a half we had crossed the ice floe, and were in fairly clear water again.

It was indeed a novel experience, although a somewhat anxious one; but all new experiences are worth living, although not necessarily worth repeating.

It was a bitterly cold foggy morning as we steamed into the Christiania Station. We were met by our brother, Dr. Vaughan Harley, and his friend, Professor Dr. Torup, who had come to the station at 6 A.M. to bid us a kindly welcome to the Norwegian capital.

The luggage was soon passed by a very polite, fur-coated, and fur-capped Custom-house officer, and we turned to the street to find a cab.

"A cab!" laughed the Professor. "We have no such things in winter; we only have sleighs."

Verily, we might have been in the Arctic regions. The whole square was white with snow, the roofs of the houses and the sills of the windows were cushioned with snow. Before us were some half-dozen quaint little sleighs, with their horses bedecked with prettily tingling bells.

Into one I stepped; but it was so low, I felt as if I was sitting on the ground itself. The little thing only held two people, behind which on a low ledge a portmanteau was fixed, the Norwegian driver standing or sitting mysteriously on the top of it. This driver wore a thick fur coat, fastened at the waist by a leather strap. His collar was not turned up; but he wore a deep fur cap right over his ears.

The horse's tail was level with our faces. The animal wore very little harness and no traces, the shafts sufficing to hold him to the sledge. His girth was bedecked with bells, and very quaintly they tingled as we sped, otherwise noiselessly, over the hard frozen snow through the crisp morning air. The reins were of blue woven thread, and passed between us to the driver.

The Norwegians have a very curious way of getting their horses to go slower by merely whistling to them. The horse obeys immediately. When it is wanted to stop altogether, the driver says "Bur-r-r," and the little beast immediately stands still. So well are they trained, they really do not require reins at all,

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for they obey word of mouth implicitly; and they have another virtue, they never stumble.

After seventy-two hours' journey by sea and land, we were glad of a day's rest before exploring Christiania or its vicinity.

Through fairyland indeed was our first drive, to Oscar's Hall. The ground was covered a yard deep in snow; the trees were besprinkled with the glistening drops of hoar-frost; the sky above was clear and blue; not a sound rent the air but the tingle of our sleigh bells. What a scene! No mind can conjure up the beauty of a Norwegian fjord in its winter garb on a perfect day.

The Christiania fjord is seventy miles long, and, except for the passage way kept for the steamers, the whole of it was frozen. As we drove along the border of the fjord crossing over one of its frozen arms, we saw children skating at tremendous speed, while their elders crossed and re-crossed the ice with their sledges covered with market goods.

Could this really be ice with salt water underneath? Yes it was, and of such a firm nature, that a horse race and trotting match were actually going on at the moment. A proper course had been portioned off, and there the horses were racing on ice instead of on turf—there were the spectators in their sledges, instead of their carriages. There were ladies enveloped in furs, instead of in muslins; the only similarity to an English race meeting being in the excitement of the spectators.

The horses are so accustomed to the ice, they run just as well on a glacial surface as upon a road; but then they are shod for the purpose, the shoes being actually made with nails or prongs fixed into them; but even that would not keep the little beasts on their feet, were they not accustomed to it.

Going down a hilly ice-road we several times noticed the horses crossing their feet in a most curious manner; that they do so because they feel it safer is understood, from the fact that the moment they come to a level or a snowy road they quietly trot along again. The Norwegian horses are much larger than the Icelandic ponies; but their powers of endurance and their wondrous cat-like agility and sure-footedness are much the same. An instance of adaptability to necessity.

All landscapes are improved by snow in fine weather with one exception, and that is water. All the lovely depths of colouring in the moving water of a lake or river are lost when covered with snow and ice; the absolute flatness of frozen water is

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very monotonous. On the other hand, a frozen waterfall far exceeds the beauty of a watery one. We enjoyed the spectacle of seeing Hönefos, a frozen mass, during our stay in Norway, and it was lovely. A series of ice caves, through which the sun shone brilliantly, and the ice had formed itself into fantastic shapes of stalactites and stalagmites, and the colouring was like the colouring of a glacier. Hönefos is a wide fall, and as we walked across it, we tried to imagine the unutterable magnificence of frozen Niagara, when this fall looked so very beautiful.

As we re-entered the town, the peasants were returning home. The milk cans were being jingled on the sleighs. The beer-bottles standing in their baskets on long, low sleighs, were being driven by old men with thick comforters, or old women with their heads enveloped in shawls. The night air blew cold and sharp.

As we passed through the market, the old people were packing up. Both men and women were enjoying a few whiffs of a pipe prior to starting home. Many of them looked about a hundred years old, their skins were so dried up, and so lined with wrinkles. The old market women always use fur muffs, after selling their fish, and with their hands still covered with silver scales, they return them to the warmth of their muffs, regardless of consequences. Both men and women wear fur-lined boots and shoes, those who are able to afford it preferring the "fin-sko," which are made from the fur taken from the head of the reindeer. The fur is outside, and is really very pretty. It is grey or white, and the better fin-sko worn by ladies and gentlemen are stitched with red and fastened with strings or tassels at the ankle or knee, according to the length of the boot. They are beautifully warm, outside other boots, and keep one from falling on slippery roads. Without them, the Norwegians themselves often slip in the street, and foreigners can hardly keep their feet at all.

Near our hotel was a beautiful snow man. More properly speaking it was a colossal woman, seated in a snow chair with a snow baby in her arms. The figure was entirely composed of frozen snow. It had stood for many weeks, and was the work of a sculptor who had made it on purpose to collect pence for the hospital. Quite a fair sum of money was dropped into the collecting box at the feet of this curious specimen of sculpture.

Snow and ice will accomplish wonderful things. There had just been a bazaar held at the back of the Tivoli, in a palace of ice. The huge blocks of ice still remained although the roof had fallen in; but we were still able to see what a wonderful structure

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it had been. It was composed of neatly cut blocks of ice about two feet thick, one on the top of another, and cemented together by Nature's frost. The roof had been made of a net, on which water had been poured. It had frozen after each wetting, until it hung down, one glistering mass of icicles.

The Norwegian snow and ice of mid-winter is surprising to any one accustomed to the English climate. This very snow and ice is what makes Norway and its customs so particularly interesting to a stranger. Of course the cold is very intense, the thermometer never rising above freezing-point for months, and often standing at zero ; but at the same time the atmosphere is so wonderfully dry, the cold is not nearly so noticeable out of doors, and indoors the houses are kept very warm.

In winter all the vehicles are sledges—the carriages, cabs, carts, and even the perambulators are on runners. Outside the town, where the road is not trodden hard, it is impossible to walk without the snow-shoes of the country. These are called "ski," pronounced "she," and are peculiar to Scandinavia. Ski are long wooden planks, measuring nearly nine feet for a fully grown man. They are three-quarters of an inch thick, and about four inches wide, slightly raised at the toes, and pointed off like the shoes of Chaucer's day. The wood for ski is not sawn, but split with the grain, so that they never break, and can bear a tremendous strain.

For four or five months of the year the ground is entirely covered with snow, and were it not for ski the natives living outside towns would see absolutely nothing of one another, for in many parts there are no roads or tracks, and walking over snow is impossible while sinking to the arm-pits at every step. Thus it will be seen that ski are not only an amusement, but an absolute necessity. The postman carries the letters on ski. The farmer visits his friends on ski. The children go to school on ski. Everything is done on ski, in fact, and outside the poorest cottage the snow-shoes of the family are stuck up in the snow, which has been swept or dug back with wooden spades from the entrance door. There they stand—the father's, mother's, servant's, children's ski all in rows, for without them no one could leave the house.

Under these circumstances it is not extraordinary that the people become very proficient on their snow-shoes ; they can go up hill or glide down a mountain on them, besides being able to stop themselves suddenly from going over a precipice, and even to

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jump a ravine. Every valley has a ski club, and every club holds "meetings" to encourage proficiency in the art.

Once a year the Scandinavians come to Christiania to compete for the ski championship, an event as important to them as our Derby is to us. Sunday, the 7th of February, was the day chosen this year for this national contest. Although the Norwegians are Lutherans, and shut their shops on Sundays, once they have been to church they give themselves up to amusement, attend concerts or the theatre, dine out and visit friends, and make the Sunday a general day of rejoicing.

Christiania contains about 150,000 inhabitants, and, judging by the crowd, they must nearly all have been witnesses of the Ski Competition. The ground or hill where it takes place is about two miles from the town, and the whole way to the course was one continuous line of sledges, from the King's to the poorest peasants', and there were pedestrians and men and women on ski. The latter dressed in the grey uniform of the sport, and wearing fin-sko like American-Indian moccasins.

The mountain chosen for the competition was very steep, and round its base seats were arranged in the shape of an enormous horseshoe, for the accommodation of the members of the University, and Clubs with their friends. Outside this circle were the sledges and the public generally. Half-way down the hill, which was thickly covered with snow, a wooden daïs had been erected. It stood about twelve feet high; but as it was built on the side of a steep hill, its front ledge gave the opportunity of a leap from sixty to seventy feet. The daïs itself was covered with snow, and each side was ornamented with draperies of the national flag, which was also liberally arranged around the course, flying from clusters and quaint designs of ski.

There were eighty-seven competitors, each one being the chosen representative of his own distant club. These competitors were divided into two classes, the first for men over twenty years, and the second below that age. Each man wore a large number on his breast, and those who were lucky enough to have gained medals before, of course wore their decorations.

The first man fixed his ski securely to his feet. A strap fastened over the toes, and another strap went from this one round the heel. This second one is really a long loop, and enables the foot, or rather heel, to have play; the toe is thereby the only part fixed down flat to the ski.

All was now ready; every one was breathless with excitement;

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and well they might be, for this jumping is one of the most exciting athletic feats imaginable.

Starting from the top of the hill, "number one" glided down its steep face, the pace increasing as he went; on to the daïs he rushed madly, and, pulling himself up into a kind of ball, as if he were almost sitting on the ski, he vaulted into the air, landing on his feet about seventy-five feet below, to slide down to the bottom, and with a sudden sharp turn of his ski, stop himself before rushing into the reserved seats, a catastrophe which at one moment seemed imminent.

A jump of seventy-five feet from a height is no trifle; but when two wooden planks, nine feet long and some pounds in weight, are fixed to the wearer's feet, it is a marvellous performance, and shows the practice and pluck these men must have, ever to accomplish. Of course snow is soft, or they would kill themselves. The majority landed on their feet; but many of them sustained horrible falls, getting so mixed up with their ski that for the moment they were unable to extricate themselves. None were seriously hurt, although one or two were a little sprained. The winner jumped seventy-eight feet, for which he was rewarded with a cup and purse.

This Norwegian Derby is certainly most exciting, and the men are so proficient it cannot really be called dangerous. One cannot help feeling the greatest admiration for the wonderful skill displayed, at the same time realizing the enormous advantages such skill gives to men who live half their lives in the mountains of such a snowy land.

A Norwegian dinner party differs somewhat from our own; therefore I must describe one, and choose a very pleasant one given by Professor Heiberg of Christiania for our benefit.

The hour for such entertainments is about four o'clock; but, curiously enough, the old term "mid-dag," is still retained, although that hour has long since been superseded.

Every one lives in a flat, the same as in Germany, and the arrangements of the rooms opening out of one another, the stove in the corner, and the sofa of honour, with its table before it, spread with a cloth of "hand-arbeit," continually remind one of a German home.

Just inside the glass doors of the hall at Professor Heiberg's was a kind of small vestibule, where both ladies and gentlemen left their hats and cloaks. The gentlemen wore evening dress; but the ladies merely donned afternoon toilet. One and all,

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however, had either worn goloshes or fin-sko (the reindeer-skin boots), and one and all left these outer boots in the hall before entering the room.

At the door we were met by the Professor's sister, who kindly bade us welcome, and then introduced us to every one in the room, while we stood and bowed to each in turn.

Every one could speak German, English, or French, and as we were not Norwegian scholars, all the conversation during dinner was carried on in these languages. The Scandinavians are certainly great linguists. Among the Professors and artists, German is spoken very fluently, many of them having studied for years in that country.

Perhaps on the whole we spoke mostly German during our stay. English is, however, very much read, although not so much spoken, except among the merchants. One family amazed us with their knowledge of English and acquaintance with our literature. This was Professor Nicholyson's, who not only spoke fluently, but were acquainted with all our newest literature.

A neat maid, with a beautiful complexion, announced dinner, and Professor Heiberg offered me his arm, and as he took his seat at table, said, "Velkommen til bordet," welcome to the board, a very pretty way of expressing hospitality.

The table was charmingly arranged with quaint old Norwegian silver, and beautifully fine embroidered linen. The silver drinking-cups, of various shapes, had usually little round, tingling things hanging from them as an ornamentation; these dangles give a light and pretty effect, and are quite old Norwegian style. Some of the spoons, with their quaintly twisted handles, were also very pretty.

The menu was excellent, and in our honour had been composed of purely representative foods.

First of all we had a delicious white soup made from cod, in which floated small balls of the fish, along with French beans that had previously been prepared by being soaked in vinegar and sugar. This soup sounds a curious *mélange*, but it was really excellent. Next came a prepared fish, served in a *soufflée* dish, something like Kegeree, only without any rice. A white sauce was handed with this, and the capers served separately. Wonderful to relate, we had fish-knives, still a great luxury abroad.

Cold ham, tongue and peas, prettily arranged together on one dish, were next handed round, and then came hot ptarmigan,

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which in its native land, well larded, and with a thick Norwegian sauce, is an excellent dish. With this we had *compôte* of raspberries, red-currant jelly and preserved ginger.

Multer are delicious. They are yellow fruit, about the size of mulberries. They grow on low bushes in the Norwegian mountains, the fruit and flower bearing simultaneously. They are picked in October, and preserved, and served cold with cream. They have a slight flavour of pine-trees, if such a thing is possible, but they are fascinating food.

Two or three kinds of bread were eaten; the white rolls, black bread, which closely resembles German "pumpernickel," and "flad brod," a bread or cake made from rye, and first cousin to Scotch oat-cake.

Hock and claret were drunk during dinner, and sweet champagne served with the pudding and dessert.

After dessert we had cheese, and the meal ended.

"Skole" is really a Swedish word for drinking your health, and almost every time any one drank anything, they smilingly skoled across the table to some one, who thereupon had to bow, and drink, and bow again before putting down the glass. We, as guests, were skoled by every one in turn, until at last this health drinking became quite alarming, and we merely bowed in self-defence.

With many thanks from our host for kindly dining with him, and many invitations for the future (a universally pretty form of politeness), our host offered me his arm, and we walked back to the drawing-room. After a few minutes' conversation the gentlemen left us, to smoke.

Excellent coffee with scalded cream was then handed, accompanied by Swedish punch, a delicious, although somewhat sweet liqueur. Our hostess produced a large, handsomely cut-glass bottle of eau-de-Cologne, to which her friends liberally helped themselves. Every one was kindness itself, and every one wanted to know if there was any service they could render us; if so, they were quite at our disposal, &c.

One of the gentlemen was in the Ministry, and as he was just returning to the Parliament House, offered to take us with him to show us over the building. This offer we gladly accepted, and about 6.30 P.M. we left our dinner party, feeling we had been treated with the most genial hospitality.

The Parliament House is a very fine building, and commands an excellent view over a public garden. Here, in summer, are

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shady walks. In winter, snow covers the ground and the trees. The poor little frozen-out birds are not forgotten, however, and bundles of grain are tied to the trunks and branches of many of the trees for their sustenance.

The Assembly room is fan-shaped, if one may so describe it. At the narrowest point sits the Speaker, and below him, at another table, the Ministers. Facing them in rows are the members, who, in pairs, sit at little desks. Upstairs, the whole way round the room is a large, open gallery for the public, who mustered about two hundred, composed of all sorts of men and women.

This gallery being free, encourages the public to take an interest in the politics of their country, and to better understand the subjects for which they have votes. It was a very orderly meeting, although on the eve of an overthrow of the Ministry.

From here we drove off to the charming house of a well-known Norwegian painter, Eilif Petersen, to spend the evening, and make the acquaintance of Björnsterne Björnson, the celebrated writer and dramatist.

Our hostess welcomed us in perfect English, and our host proved an excellent German scholar, having previously studied art in Munich for a couple of years, in consequence of which we found we had many mutual friends. Eilif Petersen is a clever artist. Unfortunately, he had not very much in his *atelier*, but we saw many of his pictures in various galleries. His studio is triangular, with a minstrel's gallery at one end. It is a curious shape; but somehow it lends itself to the many quaint things the artist has collected about him.

That morning he had painted his own profile on a piece of gold paper, as a sketch for a picture he was to paint for the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. It was only the work of an hour, but the likeness was excellent, and the technique forcible.

All along one wall stood an enormous canvas just sketched in. It represented a revelry of the members of a famous Scandinavian club in the beginning of the century. Portraits of artists, *litterateur*, and musicians gazed at us from across the steaming punch bowl, and through tobacco smoke. A veritable orgie!

Björnsterne Björnson possesses one of those splendidly intellectual heads it is always a treat to see. He is a big man, somewhat inclined to stoutness. His face is clean shaven, except for a little whisker, so that the decided mouth and thin lips have full play. He wears glasses. His hair is almost

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white, only a few traces of its former reddish hue remaining. It is well brushed back, and shows an unusually large forehead.

Strange to relate, Björnson is no linguist; he preferred talking German, as his English and French were equally bad. He reads a great deal in both languages, and had spent some time in Paris; but he had only been three days in London and two in Edinburgh, and had felt very lonely even in that short time.

During the evening there was some excellent music. Fröken Anderson was one of the party. Björnson was delighted at her rendering of Greig. Nothing gave him keener enjoyment, he said, than to listen to good music—and music and poetry he considered usually went together. He had that day finished the text of a modern oratorio for which Greig was writing the music. It was the first time either had assailed oratorio, and they were both anxious as to the result.

I asked him his subject, to which he replied: "It is a story of modern life, in which I air my Radical theories, and advocate the advantages of peace and the disastrous effects of war;" and while retailing a few of the details, his whole being became excited, and his face radiant, but unfortunately, in his excitement his German became weaker and weaker, until the words entirely disappeared. But the animation of the man's face supplied what failed in speech.

I hoped some day he would visit England again and allow me to show him something of our great capital.

"Perhaps I may," he said; "but I am getting old, nearly sixty, and as I cannot speak your language and am too old to make new friends, I do not fancy I shall ever get as far as England again. I have still lots of work to do, and not much time to do it in. My work is my life, music is my amusement, and when I have plenty of both I am always happy. I think educated life far more unsatisfactory, more uncivilized, in fact, than the more perfect life of the simple peasant home."

He struck me as a man of great intellect, of great power; given over to hobbies, on which he was enthusiastic. Egotistical, as is usual with his calling; a firm friend, and probably a bitter enemy.

Several curious stories are told of Björnson's penmanship. He writes so abominably that no one but his wife can ever read his untidy MS. Fru Björnson helps her husband a great deal by copying all he writes, recopying after he has corrected and

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altered, until sometimes she writes the whole of a book through three or four times.

Björnson always writes alone, and in each of his little country houses he has his own den with its large writing-table. Here he will pace up and down for hours, thinking out a chapter, a poem, or an act, and not until he has decided on almost every detail does he take pen in hand. Once started, he dashes off the matter with great rapidity.

Björnson is certainly a man of hobbies, as every book shows. At the present time his overruling passion is politics. His only thoughts are political. He has never sat in the House, because he feels he can do more for the Radical cause from outside. He is verily the mainspring of the advanced Liberal watch. Some say he is a revolutionist. Anyway he is an unusually interesting man.

During the change of Ministry in February he laid his pen aside to address meetings, attend clubs, organize and carry out a Radical programme, and by the first week of March he was rewarded by seeing his party reinstated in the Government.

Politics for the time became his one absorbing thought; otherwise he usually writes the whole morning until about two o'clock, when the family dines, and after that he considers himself free for the day.

Young Björnson is director of the Christiania Theatre, and as his Father's plays are often in the bills, he is well suited to the post. At the same time he is an actor of no inconsiderable merit.

Every one at the theatre was very busy towards the end of February in the preparation of Henrik Ibsen's latest dramatic work, "Hedda Gabler." He really writes for the Christiania Theatre, where he knows the actors personally. They are consequently so accustomed to play his characters, that they are enabled to identify themselves with the parts, as far as such a thing is possible.

Great excitement prevailed over the production of "Hedda Gabler," and a fortnight was devoted to the rehearsals instead of the usual week allowed. This, to us, seems a very short time; but the actors are accustomed to play together. The theatre belongs to the State, which actually pays to send them to Paris, Vienna, &c., to study different schools of acting.

Fröken Constance Brunn played the difficult heroine admirably. She represented Hedda as an intensely interesting woman. Her

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cold scorn to her commonplace husband, her disdain for his aunt, her coquetry with Brack (who is a man from her own grade of society), and her cat-and-mouse play with the unhappy Lövborg were all excellent. She was well supported by Herr Reimers as Lövborg, who thoroughly mastered the curious character, and vacillated between the two women with all the weakness of his weak nature.

"Hedda Gabler" is a curious play, and has been received quite differently in the various countries where it has been given. In Christiania it was appreciated; in Copenhagen it was an utter failure; in Vienna and Berlin it was not well received. Paris could make nothing of it. The solidity of the Norsk character is quite incomprehensible to the gay Parisian. In London, Ibsen is not altogether successful; but "Hedda Gabler" certainly succeeded—maybe because of the excellence of the acting.

Henrik Ibsen is a Norwegian of peasant origin. He was born at Skien, a town lying to the south of Christiania, on March 20th, 1828. This year, on the anniversary of his natal day, Skien was *en fête*, indeed there was a great festival. A dramatic prologue was capitally recited by Fröken Sophie Reimers, a charming actress from Christiania, who afterwards crowned Ibsen's bust with a laurel wreath amidst great applause.

All Scandinavia is discussing Ibsen; but Scandinavia is divided. One half go as far as to say he is Shakspeare's rival, and that he is fulfilling a great mission in showing the hollow mockery of society. The other half shake their heads, and while allowing that he is the fashion and a great penman, declare he is a misguided man and a most harmful writer. Anyway, whichever side is taken, discussions wax warm, and it promises to become necessary to repeat the same caution as became imperative in the case of the "Doll's House." A small note was then sent out with invitations requesting the guest "not to mention Ibsen or his 'Doll's House' during the evening," and a notice to the same effect was posted in the hall.

If this is popularity, Ibsen has indeed gained popularity. He declares, however, he does not write for popularity, but "to make people use their reasoning faculties." He has certainly succeeded in provoking sharper arguments than any other living man. Many of his works are very dramatic; but many of them contain the coarseness of the Middle Ages *en habit de soir*.

On the whole, England thinks far more highly of Ibsen than

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Scandinavia, where his earlier works, "Wild Duck," "Brand," &c., are thought more of than his later productions.

Paul du Chaillu cannot say enough regarding the charms of a Norwegian winter in his interesting books on the Land of the Midnight Sun, and it was in a great measure due to his personal persuasion we undertook the trip which proved so interesting.

Leaving Christiania early one winter's morning, with its snow-clad streets, its sledges, and its furs, we travelled for four hours in a little narrow-gauge railway to Kongsberg, the snow-plough affixed to the engine clearing the line as we went. It was a very beautiful journey along the shores of the fjord to Drammen, and afterwards along the river's bank. The train went very slowly, so we had plenty of time to admire the scenery.

Arriving at Kongsberg, we drove off to the little Hôtel Britannia, and immediately felt quite at home in the presence of large portraits of the Prince and Princess of Wales, smiling opposite to whom was Hans Christian Andersen, whose fairy tales we have all adored in our youth. It was a funny little hotel with a courtyard, and the staircase leading to the bedrooms was outside in a kind of verandah. The stairs were thickly covered in snow, and snow had collected at the bedroom doors. Imagine going up a staircase of snow to one's bedroom! but one does funny things sometimes in Norway in winter.

Our luncheon, which had been ordered beforehand by telegram, was soon ready. Even the pangs of hunger, however, could not masticate the beef. The sauce was excellent, and the anchovies eaten with it were very good; but the beef itself was indescribably hard. We asked our spokesman, a young professor from Christiania, the cause, to which he replied—

"Beef is very seldom eaten by the people, and no cows are ever killed until they are too old for milking."

Arranged in a series of little dishes around us, were sardines, sausages, raw smoked mutton—which is really very good—and several kinds of cheese. There is a terrible kind of native cheese called "mysost," which is made of goat's milk, it is brown in colour, and served in the shape of bricks, done up in silver paper. The initiated shave this into thin films, and make it into a sandwich with black bread and butter. This cheese is really made from the whey after proper cheese has been manufactured; all the water is then boiled out, and the remainder is compressed into these brown bricks, which taste sweet and gritty. Love of this

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cheese would take some time to acquire ; the opportunity is not lacking, for it appears at every meal, from breakfast onwards. There are several native cheeses ; another terrible one, "pultost," is made with carraway seeds, and always smells as if it had gone bad. Mysost has no smell, fortunately, only a terrible aspect and taste. Dr. Julius Nicholyson told us he wanted to send a few Norwegian delicacies to a friend in Germany, and amongst others he put in a piece of the native mysost. His friend wrote and thanked him for the salmon, &c., and then continued, "the soap is very nice ; but we find great difficulty in making it lather." This was the cheese !

During luncheon we were waited upon by a bright, round-faced blonde, in her national costume. She smilingly said "Tak" (thank you) every time she was spoken to ; even when asked for potatoes she smiled her Tak.

We had barely finished the meal when the sleigh bells outside bade us start on our snowy mountain drive to Bolkesjø. As the road was very heavy, it had been decided we should all drive to the half-way house ; the gentlemen making the ascent on ski from there—a very wise plan as it turned out, for we were over six hours *en route*, and in some places the snow was almost impassable.

We were quite a quarter of an hour before we were sufficiently enveloped in furs and rugs, coats and muffs, scarves and veils, to start. We laughed at the hotel proprietor for tucking us up till we could not even turn round, but oh ! how glad we were of it all before long.

The first part of the journey lay along the river's bank ; but as the frozen river itself was much smoother than the bumpy road, we sped over the water for a couple of miles. This beautiful roadway is in summer a quickly rushing stream. A hole had been dug in the ice for the peasants to draw their water, and we discovered the ice was two feet thick. Not far from this hole was another, out of which a small boy was fishing. He was sitting on a toboggan, and had just secured three fish. Through such holes all the fish are caught in the winter in Norway. On the Christiania fjord a regular trade is carried on, quite big fish being caught in the ice holes.

As we sped along over the crisp white snow, we occasionally passed a little boy or girl returning from school, with their books strapped to their backs. In their hands they carried a staff, and on their feet they wore the curious long snow-shoes before

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mentioned. Thousands of children go to school on ski, so that their proficiency with these unwieldy things is little marvel.

Here and there we passed a small red painted farm-house, from the roofs of which hung literally yards of icicles. Once only during the whole six hours did we see a church. The road was lovely, winding in and out of pine forests, on the trees of which the glistening snow hung lightly. The ground was carpeted with from three to eight feet of snow the whole way.

Arrived at the half-way house, the one sleigh was sent back. My brother and Professor Torup took off their huge driving coats and adjusted their ski. Our stout little mountain pony was refreshed with some clover and hay, and ice-water, which it seemed to enjoy with as keen a relish as the Americans do their never-ending ice-drinks. Horses often stop on the road to eat the snow, and seem to like it very much.

Now began the most beautiful and at the same time most difficult part of the road. The ascent was steeper, and the surrounding mountains higher. Luckily it was a beautifully clear sunny day, with a perfect blue sky. The wind was a great drawback; it was cuttingly sharp, and blew the frozen snow continually into our faces, until they quite ached and burned with the sharp pricks, and we were almost blinded. In some places the snow had blown completely over the path made by the snow-plough; but nothing daunted, on plodded our little steed through it all. We were often nearly upset, and but for the driver's marvellous power of jumping off his little standing-place behind, and throwing all his weight on the up-side, we should have been thrown out into the snow dozens of times. As it was, we had one complete overturn; luckily our cavaliers on ski happened to be within call, or what would have become of us?

It was a dangerous snow drift into which the poor little horse had plunged. Vainly he hoped to drag the sledge after him, instead of which the horse merely shot forwards, and then, floundering again and again in his endeavour to regain his footing, finally upset my sister and myself almost upside down. We could not get out. Our coachman clambered through snow up to his waist to the horse's head, and kept him quiet, while our two gentlemen succeeded in righting the sledge after some difficulty. The horse was still standing up to his middle in snow. The road had disappeared in the drift, and without some sort of road a horse cannot go. The ski now came to his assistance; they went backwards and forwards several times

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over what had once been a road, and the weight of the two men flattened the snow down a little. The coachman then spoke encouragingly to the horse, and nothing daunted by the struggles he had had in the snow-drift, the animal plunged bravely on again. Only a horse accustomed to such a thing would have dared to face it for an instant; as it was, the poor little beast was quite exhausted with his struggles.

Unless the road was a bit better further on, the coachman declared he must turn back. Fancy turning back after five hours' drive, and give up our intended week in Norway's snow mountains! Professor Torup told the man if two English ladies would dare venture, he must not give way, but show Norwegians were plucky too. He saw the taunt, and with one desperate plunge we left the drift behind us and gaily trotted up the opposite hill, where we waited a bit for our daring little steed to recover.

In a minute or two he was happily pawing the ground to be off again.

On the ground beside us lay a number of felled trees. Timber is the chief Norwegian export, and the mode of getting the timber to the coast is very interesting.

In the autumn the pine-trees are felled, and there they lie on the ground waiting for the snow. The snow is the signal for all transport work to commence. The farmer takes his horse and timber-sleigh up the mountain to where the trees are lying. Probably the trees require to be dug out, for which purpose he uses a spade of wood, and not of metal. Once freed of the snow, two or three trees are tied together, and attached to the sledges, that is to say, the thick end of the timber is slipped on to the trestle of the sleigh, where it is securely fixed, and then the thin end is put on to another smaller sleigh, merely runners, in fact. Now comes the exciting moment. The little horse's head is turned in the right direction, and off he starts with his load behind him. Down the side of the hill he goes, and the pace often becomes so great, that the poor little beast has to gallop through the snow to keep himself from being crushed by the timber behind him. Sometimes the timber catches on a tree in its descent through the forest, and then the horse receives an awful wrench. His master is always behind him with a stout long pole, with which he prizes the timber back on to the right channel, and off goes the horse again. Usually the horses used are a particular breed, just the colour of mustard. They are not pretty; but wonderfully sagacious at their work. When the

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snow is very deep, or not very hard, the first timber-sleigh's horse is put on to snow-shoes, in shape something like the Canadian ones. The horses that follow do not require these, as they keep to the old track, which has been beaten hard by the weight of the timber. It was over these timber tracks we generally drove, and we sometimes encountered the carts, never without feeling sorry for the horses dragging such weights under such difficulties, and with so much danger to themselves.

The timber is in this way conveyed to the nearest lake or river, and there it waits for the thaw of spring, when the rushing waters convey it carriage free to its destination. Every tree is numbered and marked, and as they arrive at the coast, lists are made of them, and each farmer is allowed the rightful sum for his wood.

This very snow that covers the land enables the natives to do all their transport, and everything of the kind is done in winter. Winter is the time to see the people at work, for in summer they spend all their time in making money out of the visitors. They seem to be an industrious people, although very slow in everything they do. Time has as little value to a Norwegian as it has to an Icelander or a Bavarian. Time has still little value in any land not closely intersected by the iron bands of a railway, which in itself teaches people to value time and punctuality.

Another great trade in Norway is carried on in animal's skins, during the winter months. A man who has a few skins, gets a friend to join him, and with a sledge and a horse they start for the coast. At every farm or cot they pass, they buy any skins the farmer may have, just as the rabbit-skin men do in England. In Norway they collect bear, wolf, cat and fox, as well as the homely bunny.

On they trudge for days and days, until as they near the coast their little sledge entirely disappears from view, so covered with skins does it become. On one of the many sledges we passed, we noticed a lovely bear-skin, for which the man asked us eighty krones, then seventy, then sixty, and finally fifty, below which sum he would not go. Now that was only about £3, and it was a splendid skin. We were very tempted to take it; but the odour stayed us. Could we travel with that odour for days?—No it was not possible; so we left it, and like everything else one really takes a fancy to, and leaves, we have regretted it ever since.

Once arrived at the coast, these dealers sell their skins, and

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often make good profit. They do not return to their homes with empty sledges, they are far too 'cute for that. They buy cheap crockery and hardware, and on their homeward tramp, sell it. Indeed, in many cases, they actually pay for the skins they bought on their first journey in china on their return. Such is the trustful honesty of the country, and in such little request is the actual money. The horses used on these long journeys are chiefly fed on meal mixed with water, Hay is too dear to buy, and the men cannot carry it such long distances with them. For a day's, or even a two days' journey, hay is taken in a sack in the front of the sledge, just resting on the shafts. When given to the animal, a little is thrown on the ground, and if the horse has not time to eat it all up, every blade is collected and put back into the sack. In many parts hay is almost as much prized as gold.

Around the coast, where hay is very scarce, the fish-heads are boiled into a sort of stew and given to the horses, who like this form of food very much. Norwegian horses are really very poorly fed, and yet they have great powers of endurance and wonderful pluck.

As we drove on to Bolkesjø, the sun was gradually sinking behind the snow-clad hills, and the new moon was rising high in the heavens—one of those glorious combinations of departing day and rising night. The colours reflected on the snow from every shade of pink and orange, only disappeared to make room for the almost more beautiful and certainly more peaceful colouring of evening. Was it indeed mid-winter, with such a sky, such glorious colouring, such quiet serenity? The wind had subsided, and although the snow-decked earth and trees betokened winter, the sky was as clear as on a warm July evening. These Norwegian sunsets are very beautiful over the snow-clad land.

Twilight deepened into night, and the moon shed her glorious rays over the mountain scene before we reached our destination.

A shout from the coachman, "Bolkesjø!" and below us we saw the welcome lights of the little hotel. Our ski-men shot past us immediately, and at such speed do they descend a hill, they arrived long before us, and were ready to unpack us, poor frozen mortals that we were, on our arrival. The thermometer had been standing at 10° all the afternoon, and that with a strong wind is fairly cold.

Eagerly looking forward to a change into warm dry things, we opened our Gladstone bags to find the sponges frozen as hard as bricks, the very brushes frozen stiff from the snow that had

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mysteriously penetrated the bag, everything was ice, in fact. The bags had been strapped to the back of the sledge, and every time we had floundered through a snowdrift, they had necessarily been covered, with this disastrous result.

A huge pine-wood fire, however, dried our things. With the usually happy way of stoves we were soon baked, until we were positively forced to open the windows and admit the freezing air, or we should have been suffocated. In Norway in winter one is always being frozen out of doors or positively baked indoors.

As will be seen from the above, travelling in winter in Norway is no easy matter, but the difficulties are repaid a thousand times by the beauties of the land and the hospitalities of its people. Norway is only a little country, and a very poor one; but the land is rich in beautiful scenes, and the people are rich in authors, musicians and artists of merit, whose kindness to strangers is unbounded.

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SOCIAL BATH IN THE LAST CENTURY.

BY MRS. A. PHILLIPS,

AUTHOR OF "BENEDICTA," "MAN PROPOSES," &c.

CHAPTER III.

THE story of Nash is so inwoven with the social life of the first half of the last century in Bath, that it is impossible to give any picture of the city, its gaieties or its pieties, in which he is not a prominent actor. He embodied the truth of our modern maxim "nothing succeeds like success." His attitude at the great door of York Minster, when, clad in a blanket, he held the bag for alms, was prophetic. He knew his people whom he had come to reign over; and how true was the observation of that Italian traveller of the sixteenth century, who declared of the English that "they would sooner give five or six ducats to provide an entertainment for a person than a groat to assist him in distress."

Pleasure became so pleasant under Nash's good management that he had no difficulty, as we have seen, in getting money together for all manner of gaieties and improvements. But benevolent Ralph Allen was not unmindful of the poor; he, with Doctor Oliver of biscuit fame, and Nash—who also loved to make people happy, and could weep copiously over a tale of woe—took care that the charities of the town came in for a fair share of attention. A most amusing story is told of how on one occasion Nash collected a subscription for the mineral water hospital, then about to be built, and for which Ralph Allen gave all the stone, ready cut, from his quarries.

Standing at the door of the Assembly Rooms, Nash held his white three-cornered hat in his hand to receive subscriptions. He was always known by this white hat, by the way, which he adopted to distinguish him from the crowd, until it came to be

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regarded as his badge of royalty, that no one presumed to imitate. While standing thus at the door to receive subscriptions, a certain Duchess entered, whose well-known custom it was to subscribe in ducats to her pleasures and in groats to her charities.

Giving Nash a familiar and friendly pat with her fan, she said graciously:

"You must put down a trifle for me, Nash, for I have no money in my pocket."

"With pleasure, madam," said Nash, "if your Grace will tell me when to stop."

Suiting the action to the word, Nash drew out of his pocket a handful of guineas, and began counting them out: "One, two, three, four, five . . . ."

"Enough, enough," cried the Duchess in alarm, "what are you about?"

"Consider your rank and fortune madam," says Nash, still counting, "Six, seven, eight, nine, ten . . . ."

Here her Grace's alarm gave place to anger, as she saw her charitable groats becoming ducats in the hands of this man, always so generous at the expense of others. But Nash was imperturbable. With maddening assurance he begged her not to interrupt the work of charity, while he continued counting, "Eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen . . . ."

At this point the exasperated Duchess cried aloud! Catching hold of his hand, she strove to stop his reckless numbering. The scene must have been inimitable, as Nash, nothing daunted, went on, pausing only to quiet her with:

"Peace, madam, you shall have your name written in letters of gold upon the front of the building. . . . Sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty . . . ."

"I won't pay a farthing more," says her Grace, now at white-heat.

"Charity covers a multitude of sins," replies her tormentor parenthetically. . . . "Twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five . . . ."

Rage now began to give place to despair in the breast of the Duchess. "Nash," she cried, "I protest, you frighten me out of my wits; Lord, I shall die!"

"Madam, you will never die of doing good, and if you do, it will be the better for you," he added, about to count on; but seeing that he had carried his point to the utmost limit of her

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womanly endurance, he agreed to stop if she would give him thirty guineas.

After some haggling, the Duchess finally gave a reluctant consent, and passed on into the card-room in a terrible temper. Nash tried to propitiate her during the evening, but without avail. When he stood by her side at the card table she ordered him out of her sight in no choice terms, exclaiming: "Stand back, you ugly devil, I hate the sight of you!" But later on in the evening, having had a run of luck at cards, she called him to her, saying:

"Come, I will be friends with you, though you are a fool; and to let you see I am not angry, here are ten guineas more for your charity; but I give them only on condition you do not give either my name or the amount."

We suspect the Duchess in question to have been her Grace, Sarah, of Marlborough, who was in the habit of consulting Nash about many things, and making use of him on occasions—as in the matter of her servants' liveries, which he designed. Several of her letters to him are given in his "Life," but are of no interest here, except to show the familiarity of the footing on which they stood with each other—a familiarity that occasionally produced the proverbial result.

Duchesses, it would seem, had shown a predilection for Bath, even before this time, as we hear of their Graces of Cleveland and Portsmouth, who—at an earlier date—were such prominent pleasure-mongers that they had on occasions to be called to order for their behaviour in public. Their conduct was "fast" in the extreme when they went to the King's bath for their daily dip, as their voices were to be heard joining in all the noisy songs and rude play that went on among the bathers before decorum was established. A quaint old picture of the baths at this period draws the primitive assemblage with startling fidelity, which goes far to prove that we have progressed in modesty, if in nothing else, since the "good old times."

But even in the last century, of all strange scenes, the reverse (to coin a word) of Bethesda-ish, was this daily dip in the public baths! To modern eyes it is lacking in ordinary decency, although we are assured nothing unseemly was suffered to take place under the scrutinising eye of the Master of the Ceremonies. He took his stand on the wall dividing the King's from the Queen's bath, immediately above the statue of Bladud, and maintained order among the promiscuous groups of bathers,

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composed of men, women, and sometimes children, attired in various and fanciful costumes of flannel or linen, with fantastic hats, and the ladies having fans, which, if report speaks truly, were necessary more for use than for ornament.

In Nash's day—beyond the publicity which left the bathers disporting in the waters open to gaze from every window of the surrounding houses, and the loungers promenading the walk around the parapet of the bath—no improprieties were observed or permitted. Nash was very particular that the lookers-on should indulge in no unseemly jokes or exhibitions of extravagant admiration, and one day flung a gentleman into the bath for going into rhapsodies over his wife's charms, as she floated about gracefully among the bathers in Bladud's cisterns.

Smollett, who was familar with Bath—and at one time had serious thoughts of settling here as a physician—gives us the best and most reliable picture of the bathing scene in the pages of "Humphrey Clinker," where he paints the social life in Bath as seen by one who participated in and noted its various phases as a pleased or splenetic spectator. The routine of life and pleasure did not materially change throughout the century. The edicts of the social Solon were so indelibly written upon the manners and customs of society, that Smollett's delineations may be accepted as a vivid representation of Bath social life as perfected by Nash.

"Right under the Pump-room window"—writes Lydia Melford, Smollett's heroine, in her letter from Bath—"is the King's bath, a huge cistern where you see the patients up to their necks in hot water. The ladies wear jackets and petticoats of brown linen, with chip hats, in which they fix their handkerchiefs to wipe the sweat from their faces; but truly, whether it is owing to the steam that surrounds them, or what . . they look so flushed and so frightful that I always turn my eyes another way. My aunt, who says every person of fashion should make her appearance in the bath as well as in the Abbey Church, contrived a cap with cherry coloured ribbands to suit her complexion."

Smollett, writing from under the protecting alias of old Matthew Brumble, gives us another view of the subject, which must be read, like all choice writings, in the original language to be understood, or possibly appreciated, since translation or quotation is out of the question.

Between the hours of six and nine the bathing began. Ladies came in their sedan chairs already dressed in costume for the

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bath. As soon as they stepped into the water, bath-attendants handed each one a wooden bowl, which floated on the water and held their nosegay, snuff-box, handkerchief and fan. If any were new-comers to the bath, an attendant accompanied her until she grew accustomed to the exercise. After remaining an hour in the water chatting, swimming, not to mention flirting — the "Have-at-alls!"—that is to say with the "pretty fellows," as the "smart" men in those days were styled, the ladies called for their chairs, and returned in this damp condition to their lodgings to dress. Smollett, speaking of these chairs, calls them "so many sponges, which must give a charming check to the patient piping hot from the bath." The chair-men were veritable scourges to these damply clad invalids or fashionables. The chair was a *cul-de-sac* from which there was no escape unless they paid the fare demanded. If they refused, they were kept in durance vile until they consented; as the chair-man locked them in; and if very obstinate, a little gentle pressure was used to bring them to a better mind, by removing the top of the chair and exposing them to the play of the elements on their damp garments. This treatment was generally found effective in extorting the required sum. Nash put an end to all this, and, if for nothing else, deserved the thanks of the community.

It was the custom among those who had derived benefit from the waters to record their gratitude by having memorial brass rings, bearing their names engraved on them, inserted into the walls of the large bath.

But these cisterns apart—which to a young girl had not the delightful attractions they offered to her more mature aunt, Bath, according to Smollett, was a very paradise for girls. It is thus he makes Lydia Melford give her impressions, which may be accepted as a faithful expression of what all girls felt on coming to Bath.

"Bath to me is a new world. All is gaiety, good-humour and diversion. The eye is continually entertained with the splendour of dress and equipage, and the ear with the sound of coaches, chaises, chairs and other carriages."

Fresh arrivals were greeted with a peal of joy-bells, which set all the *quidnuncs* asking who they were, and kept the town in a continual state of rejoicing through the perpetual ringing of bells from morning until night. A further honour awaited them in a serenade under their windows from the city waits; attentions —for all of which, while it gave them distinction—they were

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expected to pay handsomely. The first thing to be done on arrival was to write their names in the visitor's book in the Pump-room, as an announcement to the Master of the Ceremonies, who, when the family were lodged, called upon them to bid them welcome and extract subscriptions—guineas for the balls, the reading-room, the library, &c. After thus paying their footing they were given the freedom of the Pump and Assembly Rooms and society generally.

Smollett's *débutante* describes how they went at eight o'clock in the morning "en dishabille (or a *negligée*) to the Pump-room, which," she says, "is crowded like a Welsh fair; and there you see the highest quality and the lowest trades-folk jostling each other without ceremony, hail fellow, well met. The noise of the music in the gallery, the heat and the flavour of such a crowd, and the hum and buzz of their conversation gave me vertigo the first day; but afterwards all these things became familiar and even agreeable. . . . The pumpers attend within the bar, and glasses of different sizes stand ranged in order before them, so you have only to point out what you require. Hard by the Pump-room is a coffee house for ladies; but my aunt says young ladies are not admitted, inasmuch as the conversation turns upon politics, scandal, philosophy and other topics above our capacity; but we are allowed to accompany them to the book-sellers' shops, where we read novels, plays, pamphlets and newspapers for so small a sum as a crown a quarter, and in these offices of intelligence (as my brother calls them) all the reports of the day and all the private transactions of Bath are first entered and discussed. From the booksellers' shops we make a tour through the milliners and toy men, and commonly stop at Mrs. Gill the pastry-cook's to take a jelly, a tart, or a small basin of vermicelli. There is, moreover, another place of entertainment on the other side of the water, opposite the Grove, to which the company cross over in a boat—it is called Spring Gardens, laid out in walks and ponds, and parterres of flowers; and there is a long room for breakfasting and dancing." "After all the great scenes of entertainment at Bath are the two public rooms, where the company meet alternately every evening."

A word in passing about these rival rooms, often puzzling to readers owing to the fashion that obtained of calling them, as time went on, by the names of their respective and successive owners. When Bath became a fashionable resort, and Inigo Jones' Town-hall was found too small for the company, Nash

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prevailed on a man named Harrison to build a set of rooms, which were erected where the Literary Institute now stands. These were called Harrison's rooms. He made a fortune by them, and on his retiring they were taken by Lord Hawley and his mistress—or wife—by whose maiden name of Hayes they were next called; after this, Simpson's.

The gay world soon outgrew the Harrison-Hayes-Simpson rooms, and Wood built a new set on the opposite side of the road, where York Street now stands. Dame Lindsay took these and made a fortune by them, and then passed them on to Wiltshire. While ostensibly used for public amusement, they were secret gambling hells, from which Nash drew his means of subsistence, as he held a share in the tables that later on proved his ruin, as we shall see. It is these rooms Lydia now describes:

"They are spacious, lofty, and when lighted up appear very striking. They are generally crowded with well-dressed people, who drink tea in separate parties, play cards, walk, or sit and chat together, just as they are disposed. Twice a week there is a ball, the expense of which is defrayed by a voluntary subscription among the gentlemen, and every subscriber has three tickets. I was there Friday last with my aunt, under the care of my brother who is a subscriber; . . . The place was so hot, and the smell so different from what we are used to in the country, that I was quite feverish when we came away. Aunt says it is the effect of a vulgar constitution, reared among woods and mountains, and that as I become accustomed to genteel society it will wear off."

This excerpt from Smollett gives the most graphic picture of the times to be met with anywhere, and is fully corroborated by Wood and Goldsmith.

The drama always found a welcome in Bath; but owing to an Act of Parliament passed in 1737, suppressing play-houses, plays and players were compelled to vacate the theatre in Bath and took refuge in the cellars beneath the ball-room of Harrison's Assembly Rooms. After hiding for ten years in that stronghold, and finding that neither the law nor Act of Parliament had molested it the while, the drama crept forth into daylight, and determined to assert itself in the open street in a new and public theatre. But this design was frustrated by the death of the enterprising actor Mr. Hippesley, before the money required for the building had been gathered together. So the poor drama had to return once more to the cellar, where it remained until

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1768, when a new theatre was erected in which many famous actors graduated. Bath was considered the best school for London. Quin, Garrick and Foote were frequenters of Bath. Quin ultimately settled in the place, at the invitation of Nash, whose friend he was until they fell out towards the end of Nash's life; but of this more later on. Quin lies buried in the Abbey. Garrick wrote his epitaph, the first line of which, while doing justice to the comic actor and wit, has a discordant note when read in connection with the sanctity of the place.—To immortalise there

"That tongue which set the table in a roar,"

seems a doubtful compliment. There is a savour of semi-jocularity about it that fails in good taste. On Quin's grave in the centre aisle are these lines:—

"Here lies the body of Mr. James Quin;
The scene is changed, I am no more;
Death's the last act—now all is o'er."

Quin, alive or dead, was not a man to be forgotten. His *bon mots* would fill a book. Some of them were admirable, as for instance, when at a party in Bath, a lord once said to him, "Quin, my boy, what a pity a clever fellow like you should be a player!" Upon which Quin turned smartly on the speaker, exclaiming: "What would your Lordship have me be?—a lord!"

Public breakfasts at the Assembly Rooms were a great institution, as were concert breakfasts—a more expensive form of entertainment to which people invited their friends. These concert breakfasts were partially amateur, as any person of rank or fortune could join the orchestra. Between bathing, drinking the waters, breakfasting, concerts, service at the Abbey and the library, the morning passed until twelve o'clock, when all the company assembled either on the "walks" or the "parades." Here they made up their parties for the evening. Others, again, went riding or driving, or took country walks until dinner-time, at two o'clock. After dinner they had prayers—the serious-minded among them—and then met once more at the Pump-room for their second or third glass. Then came a little more promenading on the "walks" until tea-time, tea being usually served in the Assembly Rooms. Afternoon teas were apparently as fashionable then as now. Sally Lunn used to supply in those days the hot-buttered tea-cakes which have immortalized her

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name. Her little shop still exists in what was then called Lilliput Lane, since changed to North Parade Passage. The public balls every Tuesday and Friday evening were generally preceded—according to the advertisements in the paper—either by a concert or theatricals. "Thus Bath," we are told, "yielded a continued rotation of diversions, and people of all ways of thinking, even from the libertine to the Methodist, were able to fill their day with pleasures and employments suited to their inclinations."

As master of the revels on a larger scale, just as when a Temple student he entertained King William III., Nash was the moving spirit of all the festivities of these modern "idolators," who, whatever else their real business in life, met in Bath "to eat and drink and rose up to play."

As time wore on to the forties, many who came to pay an occasional visit to Bath decided to stay. The builder did not then, as now, speculate largely in green wood and inadequate bricks and mortar, the scorn, according to Carlyle, of the honest mason. Noblemen and gentlemen of fortune wishing to be well housed when they came to Bath—which they now did annually—ordered houses to be built for them which they took on lease and called by their names. Among these were the Dukes of Northumberland, Beaufort, Kingston, Chandos, Bedford and Marlborough, all of whom owned houses, as did Pitt the elder, with Lords Howth, Clive, Sandwich and Chesterfield.

A genius among architects was John Wood the elder, a man quite in advance of his age. He may be said to have revived the classic glory and honest workmanship of earlier times; thus it is that some of the old Bath houses stand unrivalled for the artistic elegance of the interior adornment no less than for the solidity of their masonry, while their exterior is classical in design and the admiration of the connoisseur. John Wood had a son known as John Wood the younger, who worthily aided and succeeded his father in beautifying the city. Later on in the century he was to build the Crescent which now stands unrivalled by any work of the kind in all England, and a splendid memorial of his genius.

The cry of "Ichabod" has gone forth over many of these princely mansions of a bygone day. The Duke of Kingston's house in Kingsmead Square is now distributing its spacious front between potatoes and fish for public sale. Lord Chesterfield's house in Pierrepont Street, from which some of his famous letters

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were written to his son, is divided into two lodging-houses. It was from this house he wrote of himself and Lord Tyrawley. "Tyrawley and I have been dead these two years, but we don't choose to have it known." Duke Street, which intersects the North and South Parade, though now the dullest street in Bath, was once, as its name implies, the residence of dukes.

Smollett, writing on the improvements going on in Bath in the direction of new buildings, is most amusing. By the mouth of gout-stricken, grumpy Matthew Bramble, he indulges in the following "lamentations," the echo, no doubt, of much that was said at the time on the subject, present time like absent people being "always wrong."

"You must know," he writes, "I find nothing but disappointment at Bath, which is so altered that I can scarce believe it the same place I frequented thirty years ago. Instead of that peace . . . so necessary . . . to bad health . . . we have nothing but noise, tumult and hurry, with the fatigue and slavery of maintaining a ceremonial more stiff, formal and oppressive, than the etiquette of a German Elector. A national hospital it may be, but one would imagine none but lunatics were admitted, and truly, I will give you leave to call me so if I stay much longer in Bath . . . I was impatient to see the boasted improvements in architecture . . . The square (Queen's Square) . . . is by far the most wholesome and agreeable . . . "

Bramble complains, however, of the avenues leading to it. In those days the chief inn was "The Bear." It was through the yard of this inn he groaned to find he had to be carried from Queen's Square to reach the Baths, "wincing," as he says, "under the curry-combs of grooms and postillions." He supposes that "after some chair-men shall have been maimed and a few lives lost by these accidents, that the Corporation would think more in earnest about providing a more safe and commodious passage. The circus," he continues, "is a pretty bauble contrived for show, and looks like Vespatian's amphitheatre turned outside in. The same artist who planned the Circus has likewise projected a Crescent; when that is finished we shall probably have a Star, and those who are living thirty years hence may perhaps see all the signs of the Zodiac exhibited in architecture in Bath."

Like all who see things too close at hand and without due perspective, Matthew Bramble (*i.e.* Smollett) grumbles at everything, declaring that the new buildings springing up everywhere

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in Bath look like the "wreck of streets and squares disjointed by an earthquake," as if some Gothic devil had stuffed them together in a bag and left them to stand . . . just as choice directed. All these absurdities arise from the general tide of luxury which has overspread the nation . . . Every upstart of fortune, harnessed in the trappings of the mode, presents himself at Bath as the very focus of observation. Clerks and factors from the East Indies, loaded with the spoil of plundered provinces; planters, negro-drivers and huxters from our American plantations, enriched they know not how; agents, commissaries, contractors who have fattened in two successive wars on the blood of the nation; usurers, brokers, and jobbers of every kind; men of low birth and no breeding have suddenly found themselves translated in a state of affluence unknown to former ages; and no wonder that their brains should be intoxicated with pride, vanity and presumption. Knowing no other criterion of greatness but the ostentation of wealth, they discharge their affluence without taste or conduct through every channel of the most absurd extravagance; and all of them hurry to Bath, because here, without any further qualification, they can mingle with the princes and nobles of the land. Even wives and daughters of low tradesmen, who, like shovel-nosed sharks, prey upon the blubber of those uncouth whales of fortune, are infected with the same rage of displaying their importance; and the slightest indisposition serves them for a pretext to insist upon being conveyed to Bath, where they may hobble country dances and cotillons among lordlings, squires, counsellors and clergy. These delicate creatures from Bedfordbury, Butchers' Row, Crutched Friars, and Botolph Lane cannot breathe the gross air of the lower town, or conform to the vulgar rules of a common lodging-house; the husband must therefore provide an entire house, or elegant apartment in the new buildings. Such is the composition of what is called fashionable company at Bath, where a very inconsiderable proportion of genteel people are lost in the mob of impudent plebeians who have neither understanding nor judgment, nor the least idea of propriety and decorum, and seem to enjoy nothing so much as an opportunity of insulting their betters."

Gouty diatribe as this is, we are disposed to think it gives a correct idea of a state of society which luxury unrestrained by breeding had too effectually corrupted. Nash's rules would lead one to support this idea, since their aim is ever to repress the

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encroachments of the "impertinents," the "captious," the "Have-at-alls," and the "levellers."

The balls given twice a week at the rooms were important functions. They began at six in the evening and ended at eleven, on account of the invalids, who were ordered to keep early hours. The ceremonial observed at them was stiff in the extreme, as Smollett complained. Each ball opened with a minuet—a slow, solemn mystery of dancing representative of the grace and dignity of man and woman. This was led off by two persons of the highest distinction in the room, who had to stand up singly and go through the measured tread before the gaze of the company assembled. No slight ordeal this, which provoked the *bon mot* from Lord Chesterfield that the couple dancing a minuet "looked as if they were hired to do it, and were doubtful of being paid!" When the pair had finished, the Master of the Ceremonies led the lady to her seat, leaving the gentleman standing while he brought him a fresh partner. This apportioning of two ladies to every gentleman was obligatory, in order that every lady who was anxious to be seen should have an opportunity of "taking the floor." The minuet lasted two hours, until eight o'clock, and was the solid portion of the entertainment; after which came the lighter fare of the *contre*, or country dances, in which ladies stood up in the order of precedence to "cross hands and down the middle." If the company were mixed, precedence was protective, as no commoner was permitted to intrude on the seats set apart for titled ladies.

But now what is this? The dance has begun, and one of the fair ladies present, high up in the order of precedence, is so extremely delicate and proud of her pedigree that she can only touch the back of an inferior's hand as she goes down the dance. Nash, on the alert, sees this, and, going up to her, calls her to order, and in no measured terms bids her either to "leave the room or behave with common decency." Another couple have gone down the dance, but, feeling that they would prefer each other's society to dancing, are leaving the dance before it is finished. Once more Nash, the tyrant, comes forward, and reminds them that if they transgress the rules, which forbid their leaving off before the end, he shall not permit them to dance any more that evening. They know what this means only too well, as in the carrying out of his rules Nash is inexorable.

At nine o'clock there is a lull in the ball, while the gentlemen take their guests and partners into the tea-room. The balls, it

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will be remembered, are given by the gentlemen, who are each allowed to invite three ladies, and cautioned not to give their tickets to any but ladies. Just now there is a commotion; a waiting-maid has been discovered among the dancers. She is pretty, and is dressed up in the clothes of her mistress, who happens to be away from Bath. The gallant who has admitted her thinks she will not be discovered in her disguise. Foolish fellow! As if the recollection of every garment once seen in public is not stored in the wards of some female memory! Detection and punishment follow swiftly on each other, and the "pretty fellow" with his pretty waiting-maid are ignominiously cast out by the indignant Nash, who is too wary for such mistakes to occur very often.

There is a sigh of relief in the breasts of many when tea is over; for now all further ceremony is relaxed for the rest of the evening. After three hours of "minuet" and "buckram," the young men and maidens are glad to get rid of Nash, and be free to follow another form of amusement—the same in all ages—such as young people of this century will recognise under the name of "sitting out;" when they are at liberty to clothe their previously silent admiration in suitable words and attentions untrammelled by Nash, or the laws of obligation or precedence.

Nash and others, meanwhile, are in the card-room improving the wax-lit hours by gathering coin; losing it, too, heavily on occasions. Nash is seated at the card table, his finely plaited white shirt hanging somewhat loosely over a low buttoned flowered waistcoat, and his handsome velvet gold-laced coat giving importance to his somewhat clumsy form, while under his arm he carries his famous white hat, which he declares he adopted not from singularity, but for security, as he was always losing his others. He is coarse in feature, and shaven smooth of face, which shows every wrinkle and fold of his heavy, fleshy jowl. This is modified, however, by an imposing periwig. He has just lost five hundred pounds. He takes his loss somewhat gravely. Rising from the table, he encounters my Lord Chesterfield—arch cynic and polished courtier—to whom Nash complains in oath-adorned language of the ill-treatment he is receiving at the hands of Dame Fortune, who has beaten him horribly of late. "Is it not surprising," he asks, "that I should be thus eternally mauled?" To which his Lordship caustically replies:—"I don't wonder at your losing money, Nash, but all

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the world is surprised where you get it to lose!" Dame Lindsay and others could have told his Lordship.

But of this enough for the present. It is about to strike eleven and Nash hastens to the ball-room. On reaching it he holds up one finger as a signal to the conductor to stop playing. The ladies cease dancing; but are allowed to remain just long enough to get cool. Then their cavaliers see them into their chairs, and they return home to sad or happy dreams, according to the success of their evening.

Nash also goes home to his house in St. John's Court. Its exterior is not unimposing. The entrance to the front door is supported on pillars surmounted by a pair of important looking eagles, and a carved lion's head stares proudly from over the centre. The hall is not large; to the right is an ante-chamber; immediately facing the door is the dining-room, where Nash is pleased to welcome all who "desire his friendship or need a dinner," which at his table is mostly a plain one, boiled chickens and roast mutton being his favourite viands. On leaving the dining-room an easy flight of stairs to the right takes you up to the drawing-room, which is over the dining-room and the ante-chamber. This was at once his throne-room and hall of audience, and contrasted strongly with the meanness of his sleeping apartment, which was simply a small garret, with sloping roofed ceiling. This exterior pomp and interior poverty were characteristic of the man. At the same time Nash "at home" was a kind and considerate host. His friends and his servants loved him. Goldsmith, who knew him personally and frequently dined with him, says:—"No man in his house perhaps was more regular, cheerful and beneficent. To those who were his guests at table he was wont to say after grace had been given:—"Come, gentlemen, eat and welcome, spare and the Devil choke you." Goldsmith excuses himself for mentioning this; he does so merely because it was so well known and consistent with the singularity of Nash's character and behaviour.

As titular King of Bath, recognized as such by the Civic authorities, Nash drove an equipage that was regal. His chariot was drawn by six black horses, well matched and pacing so regularly, that when in full trot any one at a distance would imagine only one horse drew the carriage. He kept a coachman, postillion, two footmen in livery, and a running footman. These running footmen were quite a feature of the bygone age, and always in the suite of people of distinction. Nash's running

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footman was famed for his swiftness, and is said to have run from Bath to London in one day. He was quite a "character" in Bath, as well known for his Irish "bulls" as for his running. An amusing instance is told of how Nash once sent Bryan, as he was called, with the present of a hare to the Duke of Beaufort. On reaching the top of Lansdown hill, on the road to Badminton, Bryan thought that as the hare was alive he might just as well have a little sport on his own account, so he untied the basket in which it was secured, and taking off his coat he started the hare, and then his dog that had accompanied him; after which he followed at full speed until the hare was out of sight.

When he came back for his coat and the basket, he found on reaching the spot where he had left them that both were gone. But he had Nash's letter in his pocket, and went on with it, minus hare and coat and basket, to Badminton. Arrived there, he was taken to his Grace, who asked him what he had brought.

"Arrah by my shoul and shalvation I've brought a letter for your Dukeship," said Bryan, handing him his master's letter announcing the present of the hare. The Duke read it, and when he had concluded he said, "I am glad the hare has come."

"By my shoul," returns Bryan, "so am I; but pray your Graceship is my great-coat come too?"

Nash was very fond and proud of this Bryan, and one night at supper the conversation turning on Bryan's blunders, Nash told his guests that he had not taken him for his head. He offered there and then to lay a wager of two hundred pounds that Bryan would go to London with a letter the next morning and return to Bath with the answer on the following day. The challenge was accepted, and Bryan was sent for, to know if he agreed to it and would take the journey. He did so, little dreaming that he was agreeing to his own death warrant! He started next morning, running from Bath to London and back again to Bath, arriving home three-quarters of an hour before he was due! But the effort killed him. In three days he was dead. Nash was greatly distressed. He could not touch the blood money his boast had won, so he handed it over to Bryan's widow and children, together with the proceeds of a collection he had made for them, which secured them from want.

Although residing in what Smollett calls a National hospital, and the friend of Oliver and Cheney, Nash had no faith in doctors. Doctor Cheney, a man much in vogue then in Bath, was a friend of his, and on one occasion, after prescribing for him,

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called to see how Nash was progressing. To his surprise he found his patient up and well, and asked him if he had followed his prescription.

"Followed your prescription!" cried Nash. "No; egad, if I had I should have broke my neck, for I flung it out of two pair of stairs window!"

Doctor Cheney tried to induce Nash to become a vegetarian, but the idea was not palatable in any form, and disagreed most of all with the Beau's religious views!

"I swear, Cheney," he would exclaim, "it is your design to send half the world grazing like Nebuchadnezzar." Upon which Doctor Cheney would retort that "Nebuchadnezzar was never such an infidel as Nash!"

In his desire to be thought a wit, Nash was sometimes brutal in his jokes, and on one occasion received a smart reprimand. He was walking in the Grove when he met two ladies, one of whom was deformed. Addressing her, he asked where she had come from.

"Straight from London," was the reply.

"Confound me, madam," he said, "then you must have been d——ly warpt by the way."

The lady said nothing at the time to so unfeeling and ill-timed a pleasantry, but it rankled. A few days after, Nash joined her as she was sitting in the rooms, and asked her, with a sneer and a bow, if she knew her catechism and could tell him the name of Tobit's dog.

"His name, sir, was *Nash,* and an impudent dog he was!"

He was a great *raconteur,* and in conversation always had something, as he considered, *à-propos* to the subject talked about. A specimen of his manner of telling a story is given by Goldsmith. It was one of Nash's favourite stories, which he told over and over again to every fresh listener, much to the weariness of those who had heard it before. He would begin, no matter what the topic, by saying—

"I'll tell you something to that purpose that will make you laugh. A covetous old parson, as rich as the devil, scraped acquaintance with me several years ago at Bath. I knew him when he and I were students at Oxford, where we both studied damnatiously hard, but that's neither here nor there. Well, very well. I entertained him at my house in John's Court—no, my house in John's Court was not built then—but I entertained him with all the city could afford; in the rooms, the

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music and everything in the world. Upon his leaving Bath he pressed me very hard to return the visit, and desired me to let him have the pleasure of seeing me at his house in Devonshire. About six months after I happened to be in the neighbourhood, and was resolved to see my old friend, from whom I expected a very warm reception. Well, I knocks at his door, when an old, queer creature of a maid came to the door and denied him. I suspected, however, he was at home, and going into the parlour what should I see but the parson's legs up the chimney, where he had thrust himself to avoid entertaining me. This was very well . . . . "

In this style Nash continues to narrate how, on pretence of being cold, he begged the maid to light him a fire, which she tried to evade, as the chimney smoked. Nash persisted, however, and seeing some straw in the grate he set fire to it, and, as he says, "unkennelled the old fox, to his great confusion."

How was it that Nash, who at the outset of life was ready to face starvation to secure matrimony, never married? The student had developed into a gallant, the gallant into a beau. Beaux rarely marry. They are too universal to concentrate. No woman is able to pay the price their vanity demands, unless by a broken heart—if she be "a woman of feeling," that is to say. It is a happy thing, therefore, when the evanescent nature of their affections becomes apparent to themselves and they desist from endeavouring to find a permanent sacrifice.

When Nash was in seemingly affluent circumstances and the leader of fashion in Bath, he proposed to a certain Miss V——, of D——, and was accepted by her father as a desirable suitor. When he asked the young lady herself, he met with another reception. She begged to be excused as she was fond of some one else. Her father, who regarded affection as a very secondary matrimonial consideration, was very wrath, and insisted upon her taking Nash.

Nash revolved the situation in his mind and determined to make a splendid *coup de théâtre*. It was not likely he was going to hamper his beauship with the dead weight of an unwilling bride, who would no doubt develop with disappointment into a scolding Xantippe and ruin his career. So he saw the girl and told her not to distress herself, but to confide to him the name of her lover and he would arrange everything for her to her satisfaction. She did so. Nash sent for him, and taking the young lady's hand placed it within that of his rival, together with a

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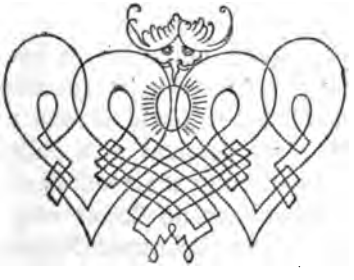
fortune equal to what her father intended to give her had she married himself!

One hardly knows how to judge such an action. If the "sensibility" of this generation were equal to the last, it ought to move us to tears of admiration. Unfortunately the sequel tempts us to the conclusion that Nash had learnt enough of the young lady's character to be glad to pay handsomely to be "off the bargain" and disarm the stern parent, who, seeing Nash's disinterestedness, was conscience-stricken, and gave his daughter not only his blessing but also a dowry.

And now, to disclose the third act of this drama. Alas for the honour of womanhood, that we should have to reveal such a harrowing climax to a story so full of fine sentiments! But the truth must be told. The poor husband died of grief in the first year of his married life, because his wife, before six months were over, had run off with her footman!

(*To be continued.*)



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FRANCESCA DA RIMINI.

"Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria"—*Inferno.*

WELL might the memory of the "happy sighs,"
The "much desire," whose fair, fruit-boding bloom,
Set in the trembling kiss that held their doom,
Burn fiercelier than the flame that never dies:
Those ever-linkèd souls, whom Dante's eyes,
Weeping, saw driven through the dawnless gloom
By hissing tempest; imminent sorrows loom
Less darkly than such thoughts of rapture rise;
And well might gentle Dante swoon with ruth
When one soul told and one soul wept to hear
The tale of happy hours aswerve from truth;
But to the guiltless, when all hopes are sere,
Musing on bliss once theirs in very sooth
Is sweet, and thoughts of vanished joys are dear.

Hath noon less glory mused upon by night?
Doth June's full heart with lessened fervour glow
Remembered when the world is wan with snow?
Are its warm roses petalled with delight
Less fragrant, and their diamond dews less bright
Because in winter dark no flower may blow?
Doth music of moon-glamoured May-woods flow
Less rich to thought, when trees with rime are white?
Nay, memory and longing subtly weave
New magic round the joys that are no more;
Spring brightlier blooms by winter's dream-watched fire;
Remembered joy in sorrow is reprieve
To anguish; long-dead days from happy yore
In dark hours rise, lest hearts with pain expire.

MAXWELL GRAY.

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THE POET OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH.

SOME little time ago, in a conversation with that distinguished and widely-cultured Englishman, Sir Mountstuart Grant-Duff, I was astonished to find what a firm hold Adam Lindsay Gordon's "Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes" have taken on men who a few years ago would certainly not have looked to the Antipodes for poetry. He told me, I remember, that Sir Alfred Lyall, himself a poet, as well as a most eminent public official, had warmly praised Gordon to him in India. This, to me, an Australian, was welcome news; but although I believe I may lay claim to having been the humble means of first introducing Gordon to the notice of English readers,* I have often been somewhat puzzled to answer the very natural questions with which one is plied in a London drawing-room concerning this veritable *rara avis* from Australia, who, it is now generally recognized, had at least some "native wood-notes wild" which even the most fastidious of men and women have learnt to love. It took us, who were dwellers under the Southern Cross at the same time as Gordon, a considerable time to find out that we had in our midst a genuine poet in the garb of a Bushman. Until a very short time ago, his colonial readers and admirers consisted of what he himself calls certain "ancient-boon companions," who during his troublous lifetime were brought into some rude relations with the tall, short-sighted, ungainly man, whose feats of horsemanship, however, most of them admired much more than his flights of ballad-mongering.

It is a quarter of a century ago since Adam Lindsay Gordon began to publish his verses. But, during the greater part of his sojourn in Australia, he lived an isolated Bush-life, and it was not till his untimely death by his own hand that the local Boswells began to prattle about him. As a natural result, the story of his life was very incompletely as well as very erroneously told, until

* "An Australian Poet."—*Temple Bar*, February, 1884.

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Mr. Alexander Sutherland, who has left the marks of his painstaking accuracy and research in the Australian sections of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' took poor Gordon in hand.

But no mere literary critic, living in one of the great capitals of Australia, could have had much opportunity of knowing what manner of man the Australian poet really was; still we owe it to Mr. Sutherland that, by his industry, he has succeeded in fixing the place and date of Gordon's birth, and other facts concerning him of which the most conflicting accounts had previously been current.

In addition to all this I have lately received some stray particulars of the brief, storm-tossed, melancholy career of poor Gordon, penned by certain of the untutored but faithful companions of his rude Bush-life. The sources whence part of this new information has come are in themselves interesting and even pathetic. Rude stockmen and rough serving-girls from remote "stations"—the dwellers in the back-blocks with whom the poet was much more communicative than ever he was with the literary or even the sporting celebrities of Melbourne—have here jotted down in their own unconventional fashion their impressions of "Long Gordon." But before glancing at these, let us briefly set down the actual facts of the poet's birth, parentage, and early life in England, which have hitherto been related quite erroneously by everybody except Mr. Sutherland.

Let me briefly paraphrase the interesting and, I believe, thoroughly accurate account of the Gordon family given by this gentleman. Early in the last century, he tells us, Robert Gordon, merchant of Bordeaux and Boulogne, acquired a fortune by his industry, and unlike the traditional Scotsman, whom the mocking genius of Dr. Johnson created for us, he retired to his native country and purchased a barony named Esslemont, which he entailed with due legal formalities, on the nearest male heir among his descendants. "Marriages and ability," as Mr. Sutherland pithily expresses it, augmented the family domains; but these, of course, went to the elder branches, while the younger Gordons, true to their tribal instincts, wandered forth into other lands to push their fortunes.

The Australian poet's grandfather got as far south as Worcester, and from thence looked out complacently on his sturdy sons earning some measure of distinction in the Church, the Army, and the Navy. The poet's father, Adam Gordon, held an ensign's commission about the time that the great Napoleon was at Elba,

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and saw service both in the West and in the East Indies. After retiring from the army, he married his cousin, Miss Harriett Gordon, and went to reside at the Azores; and here it was at Fayol in 1833 that the future Bush bard first opened his eyes on this wonderful world. Returning to England, Captain Adam Gordon settled down at Cheltenham as Professor of Oriental Languages in its newly-founded College. Young Adam Lindsay was at this time a bright and restless boy of eight, who grew up with an insatiable zest for field-sports and an unconquerable love of the racecourse, which his father, now a staid Professor, abhorred. Parental admonitions, or it may be salutary discipline of a physical nature, seem to have first awakened the slumbering Muse. There are still echoes round the Cotswold Hills of those wild days and nights when young Lindsay Gordon had for boon companion one "Black Tom Oliver," a local horse-trainer, to whom the curious will find admiring references pervading "Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes."

Captain Adam Gordon by no means approved of this strange companionship. But his erratic son could ill brook control, and had perhaps never pondered on the wisdom of the great Spanish proverb: "He who will not be guided by the rudder, must be broken by the rock." Among the very earliest verses by the author of the "Sick Stock-rider" and "Confiteor," are the following, which it is supposed were aimed at his worthy father, then the grave Professor of Hindostani:—

> "I have something of the bull-dog in my breed,
> The spaniel is developed rather less;
> While life is in me I can fight and bleed,
> But never the chastising hand caress."

It is not to be disguised that, in the eyes of Captain Adam Gordon, the lad must have been a bitter disappointment, a source of daily and hourly sorrow and anxiety. Things had almost reached a crisis when Adam Lindsay failed to obtain his commission at Woolwich. The crisis was in reality reached when the dreaded "Black Tom Oliver" actually took out a warrant for his young friend's arrest. Gordon, it seems, unable to restrain himself, had, without asking the trainer's leave, taken one of his steeplechasers and ridden him at some country meeting.

Captain Adam Gordon saw but one way out of the dilemma and disgrace—to ship off the ne'er-do-weel to the other side of the world. Adam Lindsay Gordon accordingly sailed in the ship

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Julia, Aug. 7th, 1853, for Adelaide; and thus it came about that Australia received the strange addition of a genuine poet to her scanty population.

When he first set foot in Adelaide, Adam Lindsay Gordon was in his twentieth year, and the first occupation he sought and obtained was that of a private in the Mounted Police. In those days this was a life not wanting in adventure, for it was one of the duties of this splendid body of Bush cavalry to act as the "gold-escort"—to ride, that is, armed, beside the precious metal, as it was being conveyed from the gold-fields to the metropolis. The Bushranger was then a prominent factor in Australian social life, and had to be reckoned with on all occasions. But there were long hours, riding through the interminable bush, when a young man of deep feelings and given to introspection would think, till thought became an agony, of the ties broken, and the life so pleasant to look back upon, which he had left in the dear old home. It was under these circumstances that the exile began to poetise in real earnest. "Whisperings in Wattle-Boughs," the beautiful title of a set of verses not too well known in England, gives us a true glimpse into his inner life at this period.

"Oh, gaily sings the bird! and the wattle-boughs are stirred
And rustled by the scented breath of spring;
Oh, the dreary, wistful longing! Oh, the faces that are thronging!
Oh, the voices that are vaguely whispering!

Oh, tell me, father mine, e'er the good ship crossed the brine,
On the gangway one mute hand-grip we exchanged,
Do you, past the grave, employ for your stubborn reckless boy,
Those petitions that in life were ne'er estranged?

Oh, tell me, sister dear, parting word and parting tear,
Never passed between us; let me bear the blame,
Are you living, girl, or dead? bitter tears since then I've shed,
For the lips that lisped with mine a mother's name.

Oh, tell me, ancient friend, ever ready to defend
In our boyhood, at the base of life's long hill,
Are you waking yet or sleeping? have you left this vale of weeping?
Or do you, like your comrade, linger still?

Oh, whisper, buried love, is there rest and peace above?
There is little hope, or comfort, here below;
On your sweet face lies the mould, and your bed is straight and cold,
Near the harbour where the sea-tides ebb and flow.

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All silent—they are dumb—and the breezes go and come,
With an apathy that mocks at man's distress;
Laugh, scoffer, while you may! I could bow me down and pray
For an answer that might stay my bitterness.

Oh, harshly screams the bird! and the wattle-bloom is stirred;
There's a sullen wind-like whisper in the bough:
Aye, kneel, and pray, and weep, but *His beloved's sleep,*
Can never be disturbed by such as thou."

The monotony of his life as a mounted trooper was at times broken by the pursuit and possible capture of a bushranger or the spectacle of a wreck on the rocky coast. At such times we may be sure he bore a man's part.

And here we come upon the pathetic rambling narratives of some of the rude survivors of these scenes. One has jotted down how "Long Gordon," looking for his lost horse near Monster Mount, Lacipede Bay, came upon the marks of a man's boots in the white sand, and following the tracks, beheld what looked like a lifeless body. It was that of a poor German emigrant, "lost in the Bush," and all but dead, who had preserved his life by eating scrub and sucking the leaves at night. Gordon carried the poor fellow for miles back to the "Home Station," where he was weighed as a curiosity in skeletons; but thanks to his preserver who tended him, and who, as the Bush scribe expresses it, "had the strength of a Lion and the gentleness of a Girl," he finally recovered.

Another humble comrade of those days, loyal when the Poet was living and faithful to his memory now that he is dead, recalls the lessons that he gave her in reading and writing.—"Teaching me with a Patience that no other human Being could have shown."

Gordon grew tired of the mounted police and left it, turning his attention to horse-breaking at the various stations on the South Australian border.

It may be thought that this life must have been both dull and demoralising for a well-educated man of active intelligence and keen sympathies. But though a gentleman by birth and feeling, Adam Lindsay Gordon preferred the society of unsophisticated humanity. He loved, too, the indescribable solitude of the Australian wilds; and the years he passed in the Mount Gambier district of South Australia were perhaps the happiest of his life. They were certainly the richest in poetic productiveness. Many of his most popular poems, such as "The Wreck," "Wolf and Hound," "The Swimmer," "Song of the Surf," are transcripts of

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his experiences in his solitary leisure as a mounted trooper or itinerant horse-breaker.

"'Twas merry in the glowing morn, among the gleaming grass,
To wander as we wondered many a mile,
And blow the cool tobacco cloud and watch the white wreaths pass,
Sitting loosely in the saddle all the while."

Englishmen, whether they have lived in the Australian Bush or not, are beginning to know poor Gordon's "Sick Stockrider" by heart. Who can doubt that the closing reflections of the dying stockman were truly autobiographical?

"For good undone, and gifts misspent, and resolutions vain,
'Tis somewhat late to trouble; this I know—
I should live the same life over, if I had to live again,
And the chances are I go, where most men go.
The deep blue skies wax dusky, and the tall green trees grow dim,
The sward beneath me seems to heave and fall;
The sicky, smoky shadows through the sleepy sunlight swim,
And on the very sun's face weave their pall.
Let me slumber in the hollow where the wattle blossoms wave,
With never stone or rail to fence my bed,
Should the sturdy station children pull the Bush flowers on my grave,
I may chance to hear them romping overhead."

In 1862 he married a servant-girl named Maggie Park, daughter of a labouring man who came from the little South Australian border township, Robe. Maggie "served" at the inn or Bush "pub" in Mount Gambier, where Gordon frequently stayed. His courtship was certainly prosaic for so passionate a poet, but he may be added to that increasing list of persons who object to long engagements. Only a few days before the nuptials, he abruptly said one morning: "Well, girl, I like your ways. You seem industrious and sensible. If you like, I will take a cottage at Robe and we shall get married next week and you shall keep house for me." A little time before this event, Gordon, by the death of his mother, had become entitled to a legacy of some £7000. But as he had never held any communication with England, his whereabouts, even the fact of his existence, was quite unknown, and the legacy did not reach him for four years—some two years after his marriage. Unlike most colonists who receive a "windfall," he showed no desire to go "Home," but continued to live in his small cottage at Robe, which was no better furnished than any decent working man's house in an "up country" Australian township. He had,

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however, abandoned the Mounted Police and even given up his *ad interim* congenial employment of horse-breaking.

The Rev. J. E. Tenison Woods, a cultivated Roman Catholic priest, was at this time very friendly with Gordon. This good clergyman, who, like the Bush bard, is now no more, gave many curious personal reminiscences of him from the time that they met at supper on a station where Gordon was engaged breaking-in horses, to the period when he left South Australia altogether for the neighbouring colony of Victoria. The Rev. Mr. Woods seems to have regarded it as a very delectable novelty to meet a young fellow on a station "in the usual Bush costume of a slouch hat, a blue jumper tucked in at the waist, with a pair of riding cords; these again ending at the calf in common Wellington boots," who, as he rode by his companion's side under the gum-trees, recited long passages from Virgil, Ovid, and Homer in the original, varied with choice *morceaux* from Racine's "Athalie" and Corneille's "Cid." "He had an odd manner of reciting poetry," remarks the good cleric, "and his delivery was monotonous, but his way of emphasising the beautiful portions of what he recited was charming from its earnestness." Further, Mr. Woods tells us that Gordon always carried a book, generally a Latin Classic, with him on his long rides from station to station—clearly a very extraordinary kind of Bush horse-breaker!

In these reminiscences of the Rev. E. Tenison Woods there are some curious glimpses of the social life of the Australian Bush. Gordon, as we know, was well born and well educated, and his friend testifies that "he was always neatly dressed, and certainly had an air about him of a gentleman." Yet he was constantly made to feel his menial position. One would have thought that there, at any rate, the class feeling which pervades our artificial civilization would have been dropped. Let us listen to Mr. Woods:—"At one place when we arrived at night Gordon did not tell me till I had dismounted that he was going some six miles further. I had some duty to perform at the station, or I would have gone on, though we were both jaded from a fifty miles' ride amid heavy showers of rain. I met him by appointment two days afterwards. He then told me why he had ridden further. On a former visit to the station he had been sent to the men's hut instead of being asked into the house. Then he recited Burns' 'A man's a man for a' that.' Yet I must add that he took the thing in good part, and said he must not blame them for not asking a horse-breaker into their parlour."

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The poor fellow was, however, deeply wounded when he was refused permission to enter for an event called the Ladies' Purse at the annual races in one of the little border townships, on the score that he was not a gentleman rider.

When Gordon came into the legacy on the death of his mother, he abandoned horse-breaking, and, as I have stated, set up housekeeping in the township of Robe. The spot was picturesque, he was newly married, and he experienced for the first time the peculiarly soothing sensation of having a balance at his banker's. But Gordon was a restlessly nervous man, and soon grew tired of idly gazing out on the same pleasant prospect of sea and lake. The Rev. Tenison Woods, as became a psychical expert, was equal to the occasion, and suggested—Parliament. Perhaps the very absurdity of the idea fascinated the Bush bard, or perhaps it was but another illustration of the wiles of that awful personage who ever finds some work for idle hands to do. However that may be, Gordon was prevailed upon to stand, was returned after a sharp contest, and actually sat in the South Australian Parliament (1865–6). He was of course as a parliamentarian a melancholy failure. Yet I have heard old South Australia public men declare that, despite the mixture of misplaced classical allusions and Bush slang which formed the staple of his orations, Gordon made by no means a bad impression. But he himself quickly realized that he was out of his element. The Rev. Mr. Woods, who paid a visit to the Speaker's Gallery in Adelaide on purpose to hear his Bush friend in his new *rôle*, very plainly sets forth that he was a man of stammering lips. Nor did he fail to observe that the noxious atmosphere of the legislative lobbies was beginning to deprave the fine qualities of Gordon's manly nature. "He had at this time," remarks the reverend gentleman, "published some more verses which had gained for him quite a name. He was very proud of these efforts, and I noticed more self-assertion, and, if I may use the expression, more personal vanity about his talents than ever I had observed before."

It would indeed seem that these parliamentary experiences in Adelaide had quite unsettled poor Gordon, who now began for the first time to cast longing eyes in the direction of Melbourne—the Mecca of the Australian bushman. Victoria appeared to offer him a wider field both for his literary and sporting proclivities; thither he would go and achieve fame and perhaps fortune. Unfortunately, before he decided on this migration he had almost run through his legacy. Sure enough he soon became what is

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known as a "horsey celebrity," both in Melbourne and Ballaarat, where his fame as an amateur steeple-chase rider soon spread; while from time to time he contributed spirited sporting verses to the local *Bell's Life.* In 1867 he collected and published in Melbourne two slender volumes of verses. These were "Sea-Spray and Smoke-Drift," a collection of lyrics and ballads, some of which have now become world-famous, and "Ashtaroth," an ambitious but weak imitation of "Faust," and "Manfred," whose metaphysical and other crudities are, however, compensated by its one or two exquisite lyrics.

The sale of these volumes, which are now regarded by all thoughtful Australians as a valuable literary inheritance, did not during his lifetime meet the printer's bill. We next find him earning a precarious livelihood as the proprietor of a livery-stable in Ballaarat. Gordon, we know, understood well the ways of horses, but he never quite fathomed the wiles of horsey men. The Ballaarat livery-stable therefore ended in financial collapse.

Sorrow and trouble now were thick upon him. While his goods and chattels were being sold to pay his creditors, his girl-wife lay prostrate, and their only child, a little daughter of about two, slipped away in the midst of it to a better world, or at all events to rest and peace. The heart-broken poet sent the bereaved mother for a change to her father in South Australia, and then, alone and penniless, sat down with a feeling of utter despair in the desolate dismantled rooms that had been his home. He was also suffering from a dangerous wound in his head, the result of a terrific fall from a horse, for although a superb rider, his short-sightedness and dare-devilry often brought him to grief.

We are now nearing the close of the sad story. Regardless of his terrible falls, he continued to ride recklessly. It is on record that he rode and won three steeplechases in a single day, in the hope of ending it all by a death that might be instantaneous, and would not be by his own hand.

In 1868 he "blazed out into sudden fame," not, like Byron, by writing a slashing poetical satire, but by winning the Cup Steeplechase for Major Baker, on his horse "Babbler," on the far-famed Flemington race-course. When his girl-wife, Maggie, returned, they took up their humble abode with a fisherman on the Brighton Beach, some eight miles from Melbourne. To the bustling, prosperous, cruel city he walked daily, to save the railway fare, seeking any form of employment. It was about this

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time that he heard from Scotland concerning the ancestral barony of Esslemont, which had been entailed on the nearest male heir, who was now himself.

Could he succeed in making good his claim to this, he felt he could leave the world in peace, for the faithful partner of his misery and his misfortunes would then be provided for. Buoyed up by this false hope, he occupied himself, to no profit, in interviewing Melbourne lawyers, palliating the law's delay by making verses and riding steeple-chases, living, meanwhile, on borrowed money.

"In the month of April 1870, Gordon busied himself," writes Mr. Sutherland, "in getting ready for the press a new volume of poetry which he hoped to pay for when the news from Scotland should arrive, his reason for not waiting being that he felt himself failing fast. To hold out until this volume was finished, and to secure these back-rents for his wife, was the hope with which he was dragging out the weeks, when the June mail arrived and brought the fatal news that by recent decisions of the Scotch law-courts, entails of that particular form were null and void. . . . On the 23rd of June the 'Bush Ballads' appeared. . . . Next morning he rose early without waking his wife, who, however, started to semi-consciousness at the touch of his long beard as he bent over to kiss her; but he whispered that he was going for a walk, and she fell asleep again. He loaded the rifle which, as a member of the Brighton Artillery Corps, he had in his possession, put it on his shoulder and sallied forth along the beach. He passed some fishermen whose cheerful salutation he did not as usual return, walked on till he had nearly reached Picnic Point, then turned into the scrub. He was never again seen in life."

His own strong lines, on the desperate man who lay self-slain in the lonely Bush, rise unbidden to the lips :—

> "He lay as dead men only lie,
> With wan cheek whitening in the sky;
> Through the wild heath-flowers white and red,
> The dumb brute that had seen him die,
> Close crouching howled beside the head,
> Brute burial service o'er the dead."

ARTHUR PATCHETT MARTIN.

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BEGUN IN JEST.

BY MRS. NEWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "HER WILL AND HER WAY," "WITH COSTS," "THE LAST OF THE HADDONS," &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. BRANDRETH'S TACTICS.

ON her mistress's return Soames unburdened her mind, and Mrs. Brandreth was not a little dismayed and troubled by what she heard. The danger that threatened seemed imminent, and prompt action was necessary. She gave Soames her dismissal, and proceeded to take counsel with herself as to what would be the best course to take.

She very quickly made up her mind about one thing. Miss Leith must go—and go at once. "Fortunately, she has herself made the way easy for me," thought Mrs. Brandreth, as she stood gazing out of the window at the peaceful scene beyond. "None could be expected to overlook such conduct. But her going must be so contrived as to give her no opportunity for enlisting the sympathies of either of the young men in her favour. It was most essential to prevent any appeal being made to Reginald. As he had been party to what was going on, he would, of course, do everything to screen Miss Leith, had he no other and more dreaded reason. It might require not a little tact and management to steer clear of hidden rocks, but Mrs. Brandreth flattered herself she was quite equal to the occasion.

On entering the schoolroom the next morning, Mabel found Mrs. Brandreth instead of the children awaiting her there. As they exchanged the first few words, Mabel felt there was a disturbing element in the atmosphere, but she was far from suspecting the cause, and did not trouble herself to speculate about it. Mrs. Brandreth was a little out of temper—*voilà tout!*

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The matter-of-course way with which Mabel took up a beautiful bouquet of roses lying by her plate—the fact of their being there seemed significant to Mrs. Brandreth—and enjoyably inhaled their perfume, was a fresh offence.

"How fine the roses are this year, are they not?" said Mabel, with gracious intention. "You must be glad to get back to the flowers, Mrs. Brandreth."

The latter was silent, marshalling her artillery to the front, and unconscious, Mabel pleasantly went on: "Had you an enjoyable cruise? did you get as far as——"

"There would have been no enjoyment for me, could I have foreseen the unpleasantness awaiting me at home, Miss Leith," coldly interpolated the other.

"Unpleasantness!" ejaculated Mabel. "Nothing serious, I hope."

"It is to me, most serious. I have been, beyond measure, shocked and surprised—she had, in fact, been a great deal more angry and afraid than shocked or surprised—"to find what has been going on during my absence. I could not have imagined that any young lady would lay herself open to censure as you have done."

"Censure!" said Mabel, putting down her roses, and turning proudly upon the other.

"I am extremely sorry to be obliged to speak so, but, really——"

"Oh, what does it matter how you speak? Be good enough to tell me what you mean," interrupted Mabel, with unconscious brusquerie. It was difficult to remember that she was in a subordinate position, and still more difficult to remember that the other was in a superior one.

Mrs. Brandreth was quite ready to speak plainly, and now without apologising for doing so.

"Judging by your reference, I considered that I had at least reason for expecting you to be circumspect, as it behoves every young lady in your position to be, Miss Leith."

"Circumspect!" half smiling at the word. "Haven't I been, then?"

"Can that term be rightly applied to a governess who, in the absence of the mistress of the house, leaves her pupils to take care of themselves, while she spends hours in roaming about alone with a gentleman—a stranger to her—on a visit there."

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"Oh, dear!" ejaculated Mabel, a hot blush dyeing her cheek as she sank into a chair, gazing at the other wide-eyed. For the first time she saw in what light her conduct must appear to others. Recognizing this, she at once exonerated Mrs. Brandreth from blame; and, entirely unaccustomed to veil her thoughts, frankly added: "I do not wonder at your being shocked. How dreadfully wrong it must appear to you!"

To Mrs. Brandreth it appeared the most natural thing in the world. It was quite according to her creed that a girl in Mabel's position should be ready to make the most of any opportunity for winning a matrimonial prize. But, in a severe ladylike way, she looked duly shocked. Since the other was so ready to acknowledge herself in the wrong, her task might prove easier than she expected it to be.

"In whatever situation one may be placed, it is essential to consider appearances more than you have done, Miss Leith," returned Mrs. Brandreth, who was, indeed, herself especially careful in that respect.

"Yes. Yes, of course it is. How could I have been so stupid?" ejaculated Mabel, her elbow on the arm of the chair, her chin in her hand, and her eyes downcast.

Mrs. Brandreth gazed at her in amazement. "Stupid, indeed! Did the girl mean that she ought to have managed more cleverly, then?"

"I hear that you were walking about with Mr. Harcourt the very day after his arrival. As to your joining Mr. Aubyn in the drawing-room, it would, I think, have been in better taste to decline, when asked during my absence, but roaming about for hours with Mr. Harcourt——"

"Mr. Aubyn asked me to show him the way down to the sea," confusedly explained Mabel. "On the way we sat down and got talking," mentally adding, "which certainly would not have happened had he been a stranger." "Then the time slipped away so fast, and——"

"So very indiscreet! I was dreadfully shocked when it came to my knowledge," said Mrs. Brandreth, in her even, languid tone. "You must excuse my pointing out to you that such escapades are more likely to hinder than further your views."

"My views!" hotly began Mabel. Did the other think she wanted to marry Uncle Reggie?

Mrs. Brandreth was coldly silent, and, after a moment or two Mabel went on more soberly. "I am not afraid of being

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misunderstood by either Mr. Aubyn or Mr. Harcourt. I am sure neither of them could for a moment——"

"I must very decidedly decline making any reference or appeal to the gentlemen, Miss Leith. They would, of course, be bound to do their best to shield you."

"Shield indeed! Is it possible you think I require shielding?" indignantly exclaimed Mabel.

"I can only say you have acted very indiscreetly, and placed me in a most unpleasant position, Miss Leith."

"Yes, I see that, and I am very sorry you should be annoyed; but——"

"I am glad you recognize so much," put in Mrs. Brandreth, "and I hope it will be unnecessary for me to point out what your course should now be."

"I shall have to either explain or go, but which?" reflected Mabel. The attempt to explain might involve a great deal. Half explanations might only make matters appear worse than they did, and how could she lay bare her motives to the other's eyes? "I suppose I shall have to go," she murmured.

Not a little relieved, Mrs. Brandreth promptly replied, "Since you think so, I can make no objection, Miss Leith, and, under the circumstances, you doubtlessly recognize that it will be better to leave at once. But I must ask you to do me the justice to remember that the decision came from yourself. Justified as I am in objecting to what has been going on—no one in my position could possibly feel otherwise—I might find it difficult to get my brother-in-law to agree with me in this case."

The hot colour flooded Mabel's face again. What could be more offensive than the other's tone and manner? Mrs. Brandreth was right from her point of view, of course; and yet, what an element of absurdity there was in it all! She reflected again for a few moments, debating with herself as to whether or not she would take the other into her confidence; then decided that it would involve more explanation than she would care to make, at any rate to Mrs. Brandreth. Better, she thought, to quietly accept the consequences of not having sufficiently considered appearances and take her departure. Things could be explained to Mrs. Brandreth afterwards. Some explanation was certainly due to her.

"I will leave as soon as you think proper; this afternoon, if you like."

"This afternoon!" ejaculated Mrs. Brandreth. This was a

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great deal more than she had hoped for. "Very well; I did not wish to hasten your departure, but, since you desire it, I will put no obstacles in the way. You would like to catch the afternoon train, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"I will order the cart for your luggage, and—" after a moment's hesitation, "the brougham to take you to the station. Meantime," impressively, "I must depend upon your promise to make no appeal to either of the gentlemen."

"You may depend upon my not doing that, Mrs. Brandreth," haughtily.

With which Mrs. Brandreth was fain to be content. The other had not at any rate set her at defiance, as she had been somewhat afraid might happen.

Under the circumstance that Reginald must have, at least in part, assented to what had been going on, he would, of course, be ready enough to plead Miss Leith's cause, were she to appeal to him; but the girl did not seem to recognize where her power lay, nor to have the slightest tact whatever.

Mrs. Brandreth had entered the room with the determination to carry her point, but she did not expect to find the victory so easy. Should she only find Reginald as malleable in her hands, she would have got very well out of an unpleasant difficulty. Giving no more thought to Mabel, she swept gracefully out of the room and went in search of her brother-in-law. He must be told that Miss Leith had acknowledged herself in the wrong, and chosen to leave. But he must be told at once, in case the girl should, on reflection, be tempted to make some appeal to him, her promise notwithstanding. Mrs. Brandreth had very little faith in people keeping their word when it became a question of self-interest.

Aubyn chanced to be alone in the library, and she lost no time in introducing the subject. "I have just had a most unpleasant duty to perform, Reginald, and I think it is only right you should be informed of it."

"An unpleasant duty?" he repeated, enquiringly and with a half smile. What she would consider an "unpleasant duty," might be a very right and proper one, nevertheless.

"The truth is a—difficulty has arisen between Miss Leith and me, Reginald; and—"

"Difficulty?" he repeated questioningly. "Not a serious one hope, Agatha?"

"I am sorry to say it is. Miss Leith has acted, to say the

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least, very indiscreetly during my absence from home; and I have been obliged to point this out to her;" not unwilling to avail herself of the opportunity to show him how high was her own standard. "A young girl should be careful to avoid all appearance of impropriety, Reginald."

"Impropriety? Miss Leith? I do not understand you;" coldly.

"During my absence from home she ought to have kept to her proper place—in the school-room with the children—except when taking them for their daily exercise; and I consider, as would any one else in my place, that she acted very wrongly in doing otherwise."

He began to understand now; and was a little amused at the complication that had arisen, but quietly replied: "There could be no impropriety in Miss Leith and the children joining us at luncheon, when their uncle invited them to do so, Agatha; if it is to that you are alluding." Recognizing that, had circumstances been what she imagined them to be, she would have some grounds for complaint, he could make allowance for her displeasure; but the lack of anything like regret on the young girl's account—the entire absence of the distress which he believed a good woman would feel at the discovery of what seemed to be another's shortcomings—was not to be excused.

"But it was not only that. She went out with Mr. Harcourt alone, and for hours at a time, I hear, leaving the children to take care of themselves! Algy so venturesome, too! I tremble to think what the consequences might have been;" with a graceful turn of the head, to contemplate the set of the lace about her neck.

The movement was not unnoticed by him, as he replied with grave irony: "There is no necessity to agitate yourself to that extent, Agatha. During Miss Leith's absence, I took charge of the children myself; and I assure you they were perfectly safe. The truth is I asked her to show Harcourt the way down to the sea; and therefore I am to blame, if any one is."

"No; it was for her to see; and she ought to have seen. Miss Leith herself acknowledged that she was 'stupid,' as she chose to term it. Moreover, she recognized that it was a mistake that could not be overlooked, and proposed to leave."

She had preferred to leave rather than to explain! He was silent a few moments, then replied: "I hope you will not allow her to do that, Agatha, now that I have explained that it was I

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who asked her to go with Harcourt? I can quite understand that my asking her does not seem right to you, and I ought to have thought of that; but she knew I was not quite up to the walk, and it would have looked like affectation and self-consciousness on her part, had she refused. I should be sorry indeed to feel that I was the cause of Miss Leith's leaving. Couldn't you take this into consideration, and ask her to stay, Agatha?"

"Ask her to stay?" slowly repeated Mrs. Brandreth, turning the thought over in her mind with a keen side-glance at him. After all, might it not be wiser to do so? Would he have been likely to send her with his friend, had he cared for her society himself? Besides, would it not be bad policy to enlist his sympathy for Miss Leith, as would be the case if she were allowed to go for such a cause? The tone she had taken, notwithstanding, she thought nothing of the mere fact of Mabel's availing herself of the opportunity afforded her; and now it seemed that it had come unsought. The one question was, would there be less danger in keeping Miss Leith, than in sending her away?

He was quick to note her hesitation, and quietly said; "As to Miss Leith's influence over the children, there can be no doubt it is altogether beneficial, Agatha. Before she came, they were greatly in need of the attention which your many engagements prevented your giving them; and of this I was obliged to remind you." He had indeed frequently enough hinted, and more than hinted, that she did not sufficiently consider her children's needs, beyond giving them food to eat, and clothes to wear. With the belief that her stay at Beechwoods in a great measure depended upon her tact—a quality she had a great deal more respect for than he seemed to have—she had quietly borne his remonstrances, merely replying, that her small income did not admit of her doing more than she did. It was most kind and good of him to give his brother's widow and her children shelter at Beechwoods; but this involved certain consequences. She could not avoid receiving, and occasionally visiting, their county neighbours. She was positively obliged to keep up some appearance; and really tradespeople seemed to think they might charge anything to Mrs. Brandreth, of Beechwoods. She did not forget—oh, no!—that all the housekeeping expenses, wages, and so forth, were paid, and paid liberally, by dear Reginald; she alluded to the unconscionable milliners and—and people, whose charges amounted to quite her small income.

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To all this he had been deaf; her eleven or twelve hundred a year being, he considered, quite sufficient for "milliners and people." But he could not oblige her to engage a governess for her children, unless she chose to do so; and when he found that they would be the sufferers unless he advanced the necessary funds, he did advance them. That his sister-in-law should appropriate the handsome cheque he gave, dismiss her head nurse, and make the latter's salary suffice for the governess, did not occur to him. Not least in Mabel's favour, with Mrs. Brandreth, had been her carelessness as to remuneration.

"I do not deny that she gets on pretty well with the children, Reginald; although, from what I hear, it is in a fashion of her own. And, really, you know, there cannot be any very great demands upon the mental powers of a governess at their age. But that is not the question. I confess that I do not quite understand Miss Leith. She may have been brought up extravagantly. I know little or nothing about her antecedents, she seems so very desirous to avoid any reference to them—but now she is in the position of a governess it would, I think, be in better taste to conform to it more than she does. Her wardrobe, for instance, is really most extravagant for one in her position—more befitting a young lady with quite a large income.

There was an amused smile upon his lips, as he said; "That may have belonged to the past."

"I can only say it is all in the very latest style;" adding with a little laugh, and side glance at him, "one might almost suppose she had an end in view. I hope you have taken care of your heart, Reginald."

He was on the point of giving utterance to an indignant remonstrance; but recollected that it might not have the desired effect. The children had, inadvertently, made him acquainted with the fears entertained lest he should marry; and he had been not a little amused at the way in which his future had been mapped out for him. But he saw now, that, to spare Mabel, he must put a stop to such gossip, as it affected her. After a few moments' reflection, he hit upon a way of doing this, while stating only what was the literal truth. Gravely meeting his sister-in law's eyes, he said: "The only lady of whom I could think in that way is an heiress, Agatha."

"He has had a disappointment!" was her swift conclusion. The statement that the lady was an heiress seemed quite sufficiently to account for his disappointment, in Mrs. Brandreth's

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eyes. What heiress, able to choose from a host of admirers, would single out a man with a craze such as Reginald's, for spending the greater part of his time amongst the lowest of the low? She knew such work was in vogue, and that the workers were said to have high ideals; but she was of the opinion that the world would go on just as well without them. People with high ideals were, in her estimation, the dullest and most undesirable of companions. Those who did not trouble themselves about "grand possibilities," and the rest of it—taking the world as they found it—being much easier, and pleasanter to get on with. But, under the impression that she had now discovered the cause of his showing no inclination to marry, her mind was set at rest with regard to any designs Miss Leith might have. With a passing remark that heiresses were apt to be a little spoiled by the adulation they received, she went on; "I should be sorry to act in any way that might appear harsh or inconsiderate to Miss Leith, Reginald, and certainly your explanation gives a different colouring to the affair."

He smiled, quite aware what it was that had altered the colouring. She was quick to note the smile, and half perceiving his thought, a little sharply went on, not averse from aiming a shaft at one so prone to aim one at her; "At the same time I must agree with you in thinking you were not free from blame in the matter. It really was not wise to throw Mr. Harcourt and Miss Leith together, in that way. He is quite a *grand parti*, I hear; and a poor governess might indulge hopes, you know. She may appear," hesitating a moment, "rather attractive—to him, and if he were to pay her compliments, she would probably accept them more seriously than might girls accustomed to society. She is a little ultra, and inclined to romance, I fancy, but," with what she she felt to be real largeness of soul, "she is certainly rather pretty."

"Pretty!" ejaculated Aubyn, breaking into a short laugh, his eyes turned amusedly to meet hers. "Pretty!"

"Well, Mrs. Severn thought so—for her style. Do not you, Reginald?"

"No," so promptly and decidedly as to completely satisfy her on that score. Miss Leith's good looks were not of the kind he admired. There could not be any mistake in the tone of that "no," she thought. In fact, it seemed to him almost an insult to use the term "rather pretty" in reference to Mabel Leith.

"Tastes differ so much," pleasantly replied Mrs. Brandreth,

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and his may not be yours, but we owe something to her, you know. It would not be kind to place Miss Leith in a position which might lead her to encourage hopes in that direction, unless something were likely to come of it."

He was silent a few moments, debating with himself as to what it would be better to say. He could not break confidence by giving any hint of the real state of affairs; but he saw that, for Mabel's sake, his sister-in-law's fears must be set at rest with regard to Harcourt as well as himself. "I have reason to know that Harcourt will pay no lover-like attentions to Miss Leith"—had she not herself told him that he was engaged to her sister?—"but this must be regarded as in strict confidence, Agatha, only mentioned to set your mind at rest."

"I quite understand, and, of course, you may trust me, Reginald," she replied, at once taking it for granted that Mr. Harcourt did not admire Miss Leith, and had allowed this to be seen by his friend. She recognized, too, that it would tell against herself to allow Mabel to go now. She prided herself upon her magnanimity, as well as upon certain other qualities which she did not possess and was desirous of having the credit of possessing. "Yes," she presently went on, "on the whole, considering that you were partly to blame,"—this was not for a moment to be lost sight of—"and that Miss Leith's indiscretion may have arisen chiefly from inexperience, I am inclined to look over it, and ask her to remain;" mentally adding, "at least until this has blown over, and I can manage it quietly in your absence."

CHAPTER XV.

LUCY MAY.

Mabel stood by the open window, where Mrs. Brandreth had left her, gazing absently out, as she mentally reviewed the situation. "No, there was nothing for it now but to quietly accept the consequences of not having considered appearances and get away at once. If only Gerard were not there," a hot blush once more mounting to her brow at the thought of his learning the cause of her dismissal. That he would know that she had been to blame only in appearance was not enough. She had failed in proving her fitness for the *rôle* she had undertaken, and this would be a never-ending jest against her.

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The door opened, and Soames looked in, enquiring if Master Algy was there.

"No, I have not seen him, Soames."

"Tiresome child! He gave me the slip just now, and I thought he might be here." She stood hesitating a moment, then added: "They say you are going away, Miss Leith."

"*They* have lost no time in saying it. Yes, I am going to leave Beechwoods."

"Well!" ejaculated Soames, her anger rising a little at the other's tone; "I suppose it's no concern of mine, you haven't been much of a friend to me. I could see you were going to be against me, from the first."

"Against you? How could you think that?"

"The children are beginning quite to dislike me," said Soames, with a little catch in her voice.

"I hope not. But if it were so, I do not see how I could be to blame for that," said Mabel.

In her heart Soames knew this to be true. She could not lose what she had never possessed. She had not won the children's love, and now that she was beginning to understand how it was that Mabel gained it, she knew why she herself had failed.

"She has a heart," thought Mabel, to whom the little break in Soames' voice was not without its significance, "and I ought to have found it out before."

Soames was, at any rate, capable of acting in the interest of those she served. The very obstructiveness, which had seemed so offensive to Mabel, had arisen quite as much from the desire to serve her mistress as from resentment at the failure of the governess to recognize the desirability of being "mutual." So long as it seemed for the purpose of defending Mr. Aubyn from the matrimonial wiles Mrs. Brandeth so evidently feared, Soames had, according to her lights, honestly believed she was acting legitimately in being obstructive. Mrs. Brandreth had had her own reasons for occasionally allowing Soames to report the gossip of the house, but she had never taken the trouble to ascertain whether the woman was capable of being faithful beyond the price of her wages. Nor had Soames missed anything in her mistress, until she began to know a larger nature. As she turned away, trying to overcome what she thought was weakness in still desiring to be friendly towards one who had no kindly feeling towards her, Mabel went on. "I must be to blame if I have not done you justice, Soames. I am sorry if it even

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seemed that I did not, and I beg your pardon," holding out her hand.

A little touched as well as surprised, Soames awkwardly placed her hand in Mabel's for a moment; then, with reddening cheeks, murmured something about looking for Algy, and quitted the room.

In a few minutes the door opened again, and Mrs. Brandreth came in, a smile more mechanical, if possible, than usual upon her thin lips, as she began: "I have been reconsidering the question of your leaving, Miss Leith, and have come to the conclusion of asking you to remain," taking to herself all the credit of the concession. "I am very desirous to be as considerate as possible, and on reflection it has occurred to me that you might have a difficulty in finding a re-engagement just now. I am inclined to think that the indiscretion—I felt obliged to notice—may have arisen more from inexperience than anything else; and that nothing of the kind will occur again," mentally adding—"I will take good care that it does not." "And, therefore, I hope that any little unpleasantness of feeling will be forgotten."

Mabel was very much surprised, not comprehending how it was that so sudden a change had taken place in the other's mind; but she was a great deal relieved, and quite ready to consent to remain. Mrs. Brandreth had apologised, and that was enough. It did not occur to her to make the most of the situation, by using any diplomacy in assuming a reluctance she did not feel.

"I am glad to forget it; and prefer to stay, Mrs. Brandreth, if you consider me as efficient for the work as any one else would be"—hesitating a little over the last clause, in her consciousness of the increasing difficulty she experienced in the management of the children.

"Oh, yes!" adding, not to allow too much: "They really require so little at present, you know, and their uncle thinks you manage them very well."

"There is not much management about it, I am afraid," returned Mabel, with a frank smile, off her guard again. "But it is good to hear that Mr. Aubyn thinks I am equal to the task I have undertaken. How much attached the children are to him, Mrs. Brandreth!"

"Yes!" with a little side-look at the other, and some surprise at her brother-in-law's failure to recognize one thing. Then, to

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lead up to what she wanted to say, she added: "They have chattered a great deal to you about him, I daresay."

"Oh, yes! at first they seemed desirous to know whether I should want to marry him, as Miss Somebody else did. They appear to have heard too much servant's gossip."

A faint colour rose to Mrs. Brandreth's cheeks. "I suppose there has been some speculation amongst the servants as to the probabilities of Mr. Aubyn's marrying, and children are so quick to hear. But I have reasons for thinking he will never marry—a disappointment, you know." She paused with another keen side-glance at Mabel; but could detect not the slightest change in the expression of her face, as she calmly replied, "Indeed."

More at ease, Mrs. Brandreth went on. "Oddly enough, his friend, Mr. Harcourt, is also not a marrying man; Mr. Aubyn has just been telling me this, in order, I suppose, that I may prevent any of my young friends from thinking too much of any little attention he might show."

Mabel received this news also with apparent philosophy; showing no signs of the amusement she felt. Having said all that she had gone there to say, Mrs. Brandreth turned to quit the room, only pausing a moment on the way out to add over her shoulder, "And you may as well—oh, yes, bring the children down to luncheon, Miss Leith; they seem to amuse their uncle just now;" thinking that if she did not give the invitation he might; and she would thus be made to appear at a disadvantage before Mr. Harcourt.

"How very delightful he was!" She had passed but two or three hours in his society the previous night, and she was already making comparisons, altogether in his favour, between him and a certain other who had not fulfilled her expectations, the opportunities afforded by the yachting expedition notwithstanding. She had returned home, disappointed and out of spirits, to find a far more eligible *parti* staying in the house; and, what was better still, one who seemed more ready to appreciate her, to judge by his tone and bearing.

Gerard had, in fact, his own reasons for doing his best to gain her good will. The little deferential attentions he paid her were received with some *empressement;* and she was already beginning to build hopes as to what might come about; telling herself that, if such great good fortune as this was in store for her, it would be of little importance what Reginald might or

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might not do. And what a triumph it would be from another point of view! How delightful to be able to prove to the world—to say nothing of the quondam admirer—that one so altogether desirable should place himself and his fortunes at her feet!

Mabel met the two young men at luncheon a little consciously and confusedly, although she strove to veil it with an air of quiet reserve as befitted the governess. Gerard gave her a side-glance—a momentary flash of humour from between his eyelids—whilst assuming the air of a delinquent brought face to face with an accomplice, which showed her that he knew, and rendered it difficult for her to keep her countenance.

Reginald Aubyn made things easier for her by engaging his sister-in-law's attention; and, as soon as Mabel had regained her self-command, he addressed a few words to her, asking whether she took any interest in archery; and saying that Mrs. Brandreth belonged to the County Club.

As if taking a cue, the latter hurriedly put in that she was going to a meeting that afternoon, and, as it was some miles distant, she might not return until late in the evening—too late for dinner, perhaps. "But take the children down to dessert, Miss Leith."

"If you wish it, Mrs. Brandreth!" said Mabel, looking a little surprised.

With a short "Yes!" Mrs. Brandreth dismissed the subject. She had done as much as Reginald had stipulated for. When she next addressed Mabel, it was without looking at her, and in the employer's tone. "I hope you will not allow your pupils to indulge in too many good things at the Leicester's to-morrow, Miss Leith."

"The Leicesters?—Who are they—where is their place?" said Mabel, unconsciously speaking with slight hauteur, as she rose to leave the table.

Mrs. Brandreth remembered again; and explained that Mr. Leicester was the member for the county; and his estate was situated half a mile from Beechwoods, taking the short cut across the fields. But there was the carriage; or, if Miss Leith preferred it, of course Soames could take the children. "I only thought it might be a pleasant little change for you."

But Mabel had seen the smile her tone and words had brought to Gerard's eyes; and hastily put in, "As I told you, I have had no experience, Mrs. Brandreth, therefore I do not know what

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the rule in such matters is. But I am quite willing to take the children."

As Gerard stood holding the door for her to pass out, the expression of his eyes was seen only by Mabel. "I do believe he tries to make me lose countenance!" she thought. "But he shall not;" giving him a slight inclination of the head, and a look sober—not to say distant—enough to satisfy even Mrs. Brandreth's keen sense of propriety.

After the children were in bed that evening, Mabel was sewing up a rent in her dress with many an impatient tug of her needle, and irritable exclamation at her want of skill, when Soames, who had come into the room on some errand, took note of her difficulty; and, a little shyly and awkwardly—she was unaccustomed to do good-natured things, and could not do them gracefully—offered her services. "Let me do it for you, miss. It's got a little puckered, I think."

"Oh, yes; that's its way. But I must not take up your time, thank you, Soames;" with another impatient jerk of her needle. "It would not be right; but I should be very glad if you could find some one to do it for me."

Soames reflected a little, and presently replied that she knew a young seamstress who would be very glad to come to work for an hour or two in Miss Leith's room, and for small remuneration, having just left her situation, in some distant town, to return to live with her widowed mother, who had become an invalid. Lucy May was very desirous of obtaining work to fill up her time, and had been occasionally employed by Mrs. Brandreth for the children.

Mabel was ready enough to avail herself of the suggestion, and showed so much want of experience and carelessness in the matter of payment, as to confirm Soames' belief that she was in no need of the salary of a governess.

"I should like her to come for an hour or two every evening, to put things neat for me, if she can, and if Mrs. Brandreth does not object," absently adding, "one misses one's maid so much."

Soames appeared to take no notice of the little slip, gravely promising to obtain her mistress's consent. She so contrived it, not mentioning that it was to be a daily occurrence, that Mrs. Brandreth saw no objection.

Mabel's wardrobe was, indeed, getting into inextricable confusion. Dainty almost to fastidiousness as to the good taste

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and freshness of what she wore, she was unaccustomed to give much thought to it after it was once on. She was in the habit of moving freely about, regardless of consequences to her toilet, and to come in from a ramble in the woods with a strip of frilling or lace carried with negligent grace over her arm, was no unfrequent occurrence. She considered she was undergoing hardship enough in the drudgery of the work with her pupils, and partaking with dreary regularity their bread and butter and its accompanying small talk, without sitting up at night to mend her clothes.

Pretty Lucy May was ready enough to devote her spare time to a young lady ready to pay as royally as did Mabel for services rendered. She very soon found it more profitable to spend an hour or two in the evening, mending and putting things neat in Miss Leith's room, than to work the whole day elsewhere. Whether she would be really benefited by gaining money so easily, and having more spare time on her hands, remained to be seen.

Mabel was much taken with Lucy's pretty face and shy, modest ways. A blue-eyed, flaxen-haired, rosy-cheeked girl, with as little consciousness of being the village belle, with four or five rustic admirers ready to fight for her smiles, as could perhaps be expected. Her latest conquest was Bloggs, in the humanizing of whom she was unconsciously rendering Aubyn good service.

CHAPTER XVI.

MOTHER GOOSE.

Mabel set forth with her pupils the next day for the Leicesters, feeling, in the gaiety of her heart, almost a child herself. It would at least be a few hours' escape from the drudgery of teaching. The children had told her that she was unlikely to see any one at the Hall, besides the little Leicesters and their governess. They had lost their mother two or three years previously, and their father was too fully engaged with his Parliamentary duties during the session and travelling during the recess to see much of his children. His mother, who took charge of his house, trusted too entirely to the governess to interfere in the schoolroom, contenting herself with their daily visits to her own domain. Her mind set at rest by the assurance

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that she was not likely to meet any one that knew her, Mabel gave herself up to making the most of her holiday. There was, too, an agreeable little stir of curiosity in her mind with regard to the governess she was about to see—the first she had met in her official capacity.

As she and her pupils walked up the broad drive, bordered on either side by triple rows of old elms, and approached the house, Mabel saw that it was a more stately and imposing building than that at Beechwoods, although not so picturesque in itself or its surroundings, and that the gardens about it were kept in very good order. The children were now talking about the little Leicesters' governess.

"Miss Temple is not beautiful to look at, like you, Miss Leith, dear, and she does not wear such pretty things, but she is so kind and good."

"I shouldn't like her for my governess all the same," put in Algy. "They don't have fun, as we do sometimes, at lessons, and Roland says he has to work dreadfully hard, and it's no use having headaches and things—not a bit!"

They were received by a solemn-looking man-servant, irreproachably attired, and silently ushered through a great square hall, up a broad staircase and along a picture gallery to an opposite wing of the house, where the nurseries and schoolroom were carefully shut off from the other portion by a succession of baized doors.

Mabel's suggestive remark to the children that the long gallery, with its many deep-recessed windows, afforded good space for races and games, was received with a subdued "yes" by them, whilst the man eyed her with dignified surprise. But once within the precincts they were received with a shout of welcome by the little Leicesters—two boys and a girl under the age of ten.

Whilst the children were eagerly renewing acquaintance, Mabel was received with a kindly greeting by the governess, a lady of about thirty years of age, to whom the homely but expressive term "good-looking" was more applicable than pretty or handsome. She was very plainly dressed, but gentlewoman was stamped upon her every look and movement, and more legibly still, if possible, character.

As she presently took Mabel's cape, her woman's eyes were quick to note the rows of expensive lace overlapping each other, as well as other signs of extravagance, and an expression of doubt

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which had been gathering in her eyes deepened into disapproval. Her manner changed, and for the next few moments she was no more than coldly polite, her sympathies not enlisted for a young girl who apparently spent all she earned on dress. But this impression very soon wore off, and she was as cordial as at first again. She had been, in fact, quick to recognize that if the other were too expensively attired for her position, it was not because her mind was given up to such things. Mabel was indeed desirous of winning the good-will of this gentle, refined-looking woman, to whom her heart had gone out from the first, and it was not easy to withstand her when she put forth her best. Whilst the children were grouped together, comparing notes about their pets, playthings, and what not, Mabel was telling Miss Temple that she was comparatively new to her work, and found herself much wanting in experience.

"You did not expect to be obliged—you were not trained to teach, perhaps?" pleasantly returned Miss Temple, fancying that she had found the clue to what had puzzled her at first.

"No, I——To tell the truth, I did not know that any training was required until I began, and then—well, you can imagine what it is."

"And perhaps accustomed to a life of luxury?"

"Yes, I know now that it was luxury," replied Mabel.

Miss Temple laid her hand with gentle pressure upon the the other's arm, gazing at her a little sadly now. "It is hard to have to begin so unprepared. The life is a good one—there is opportunity for doing real service to the world, by using one's influence with children in the right direction. But the difficulties are great all the same, and one needs to be prepared for them as well as trained for the work, and you—— The difference between us two!" keeping her hand upon Mabel's arm, as she looked with a smile that had some philosophy as well as kindliness in it, at the reflection of the two faces in the chimney-glass.

The colour rose in Mabel's cheeks and her eyes fell. She was feeling more like an impostor than she had yet done as the other went on. "But yours will be a brighter lot, let us hope, than mine has been—most probably it will," with an admiring glance at Mabel's face and a half sigh as she more fully realized how completely her own youth and freshness were gone. But she had not the time, had she the inclination, to dwell upon the disappointments of her life, being called upon to decide some

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question of right between the children. A difference had arisen between Roland Leicester and Algy as to which was to begin the use of a new toy, the one urging his right by ownership, the other by courtesy.

"You have enough of that kind of experience," Miss Temple resumed, as she joined Mabel again, after adjusting the difficulty. "One has to be so very careful in one's decisions. It requires so much study of their particular idiosyncrasies and temperaments to hold the balance justly, does it not? Children are such keen critics, too. A pity their love of justice should wear off so much as they get older."

"Yes," a little absently returned Mabel, wondering what Miss Temple would think of the summary way in which she generally settled matters.

"I daresay you find it very irksome," said Miss Temple, with kindly intent. "It is always so at first."

"Irksome, yes, indeed!" ejaculated Mabel. "It is, to me, positively exasperating to listen to their wretched little squabbles."

Miss Temple smiled again; then, to give the other a little kindly hint, said, "Do not you find it a good plan to let them sometimes arbitrate in council over their own disputes?"

"I do not know about the arbitration, but I generally leave them to fight it out as best they can; there's a great deal of that," replied Mabel.

"You do not care much for children?"

"Oh, yes, I think I do, when one has not too much of them. It's pleasant enough when we are all good together, but they bore me dreadfully, sometimes. The everlasting babble, you know, and I have no patience," pausing a moment to laugh over certain recollections. "I really find it sometimes difficult to prevent myself falling upon Mima and demolishing her altogether! The child positively cannot think, and seems not to have the slightest taste for anything but goodies. She is so irritatingly good-tempered, too, so amiably ready to acknowledge that she does not in the least understand what I've been for an hour or so trying to drum into her."

"Teaching is hard work at best," said Miss Temple. "Even in this place, which is quite an exceptionally good one, there is a great deal of hard work as well as responsibility. Roland is eight years old, and he will soon be having a tutor; but even then it will be difficult to arrange the studies of Edith, who is ten,

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and Willie, who is only six. One is so anxious to bring out the best of them," her brows contracting a little as her eyes followed her pupils.

"You put your heart into it," said Mabel, her thoughts reverting to her conversation with Mr. Aubyn. "And you do not mind talking——"

"Shop, you mean?" put in Miss Temple, amusedly. "No, I like it, and I like others to talk their shop, whatever it may be, to me. One learns something that way."

Their attention was called to the children again. Algy had become so deeply interested in Roland's engine as to be unable to keep his fingers out of danger at the exciting moment, and suffered in consequence, with loud sobs and cries; while the other uttered half-frightened, half-angry ejaculations, about having told him how it would be.

Mabel admiringly watched Miss Temple, as with quiet tact and gentleness she soothed and reasoned them into good-humour again. Then came another *divertissement* in the way of dinner. "Company dinner," the children called it, with a "grown-up" pudding and tarts, instead of the regulation rice or custard.

As they rose from the table, the grandmother of the little Leicesters, a lady of about sixty years of age, entered the room. Like Mrs. Harcourt, she was of the old school, but was very different from that comfortable little lady in other respects, possessing, as she did, a much stronger will, and an inclination to rule. No niece of Mrs. Leicester's would have been permitted to follow her own inclinations, as Mabel and Dorothy were doing.

She was richly and appropriately dressed for her age, and had a very grand manner, dignified and gracious to the governesses, and indulgent, as befitted the occasion, to the children, for whom she had brought some pretty gifts. She spoke a few words, faultless in tone, to Miss Temple, and afterwards to Mabel, although with a difference, an expression that was not one of approval coming into her eyes as she took note of certain things. The little Brandreths' governess was a great deal too independent in her bearing—too evidently indifferent as to what Mrs. Leicester's opinion of her might be to find much favour in that lady's sight. And her dress! "Not at all the kind of governess *I* should have selected to have the care of children," decided Mrs. Leicester, as with, if possible, a little extra dignity of bearing, she presently quitted the room.

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But she made the mistake of dilating upon the subject afterwards to her son, talking of Mrs. Brandreth's want of judgment in selecting a governess of Mabel's type for her children. "Not more than eighteen, I should think, Edward, and with all the airs of a young lady in society! Dressed, too, in a way quite unbefitting her position, to set off her beauty, I suppose. Beautiful she certainly is."

Mr. Leicester listened until he became a little interested and curious to ascertain whether the beautiful governess accorded with his mother's description of her. It was certainly not entirely by chance that he found himself, an hour or so later, in the vicinity of her and the children, down by the lake in the lower grounds. Voices and laughter drew him to the spot, and he was presently gazing, himself unseen, at a prettier picture than had ever before met his eyes.

Upon an improvised throne, beneath a tree, on the borders of the lake, sat Mabel, her head, neck, and arms wreathed with flowers; the children dancing backwards and forwards before her, gaily chanting some refrain. Miss Temple, who had acknowledged herself to be not very practised at games, was availing herself of the opportunity for a little quiet reflection over a letter.

> "Queen Anne, Queen Anne, who sits in the sun,
> As fair as a lily, as white as a swan,
> The king sends you six letters, and begs you'll read one!"

"Mr. Leicester!" ejaculated Miss Temple, the first to see him, as she turned her eyes for a moment in his direction.

Mabel looked up, her laughing face flushed with a soft rose tint, and as her sunny eyes met his, she gave him a graceful little bend of her royal head in acknowledgment of his bow to Miss Temple and herself.

"Papa!" exclaimed Roland and Edith, stopping suddenly in the midst of their dance, and standing like little wooden figures, all the laughter fading out of their faces.

He stood for a moment silently regarding them; a reserved, pompous-looking man, with whom his children were evidently not accustomed to feel at ease.

"Very warm, is it not, Mr. Leicester?" began Miss Temple, to break the awkward pause, the children appearing as though they had been suddenly stricken dumb.

"Very warm, indeed," was all he could for the moment find to say in reply. But he presently went on, "Pray do not

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let me interrupt the games. I arrived in the midst of one, I think."

She did not quite know how to reply. The readiest way of inducing them to begin again would be for him to walk away, and this it did not seem to occur to him to do, as he stood awkwardly looking on. Proud, reserved, and self-sufficing as he was, he had his vulnerable side, and this was his admiration for beauty. In the few moments he had been gazing at Mabel he had come to the decision that he had never before seen a woman to be compared with her, although he was said to have married his late wife for her beautiful face. Mabel, who had been looking at him while he was speaking to Miss Temple, and had mentally come to a conclusion not very flattering to him, made no attempt at conversation. Leaving him to the others, she allowed her thoughts to wander back to Beechwoods as she sat absently twining together some variegated leaves with a sprig of verbena.

It was Miss Temple who came to Mr. Leicester's assistance just at the right moment. "Tell your papa what game you were playing, Edith."

The child obediently moved a few steps towards him, and gravely, as though she were repeating a lesson, said, "We are playing at hide the ball, if you please, papa, and Miss Leith is Queen Anne, who sits in the sun, you know."

He glanced again at "Queen Anne," her graceful crowned head turned slightly aside as she contemplatively arranged her flowers, and replied, "It is very kind of Miss Leith to help to amuse you, but I hope you do not give her too much trouble."

"Oh, no," said Algy, "she likes it, don't you, Miss Leith, dear?"

"Like what, Algy?"

"Why, being Queen Anne, and Wild Boar, and Mother Goose, and all that."

Mabel, who had cast another amused glance at Mr. Leicester, and felt bound to shock him, cheerfully replied, "Oh, yes, I am rather proud of my capabilities as a wild boar, and Mother Goose is quite my speciality."

But she was hardly prepared for the immediate demand for "Mother Goose." Now that Mr. Leicester seemed inclined to unbend a little, the children were regaining their courage, and begged Miss Leith to play, "so that papa may see what a nice game it is."

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"You will stay and see, won't you, Mr. Leicester?" put in Algy.

He signified his assent by a slight inclination of the head, leaning against a tree, with his arms folded across his chest, and the grave magisterial air with which he always gave his attention to anything.

"I must not draw back now, or he will fancy that I am too much overawed to play before him. He looks conceited enough for anything," thought Mabel, as with a somewhat heightened colour she rose from her throne and said, "Come, goslings."

Holding her skirts spread widely out on both sides, she began turning first one side and then the other, to protect her five goslings from Roland, the fox. She soon forgot the existence of Mr. Leicester, her pliant figure swaying to and fro, as she entered into the spirit of the game as thoroughly as the least of the children, joining heartily in their peals of laughter at each escape from the wily fox.

Miss Temple looked on with softening eyes. When had she felt as young and light-hearted? Never! She could recollect no time, even in her teens, when she would have entered into the spirit of a game as Mabel was so evidently doing now. Life had indeed been one long struggle for her since her earliest girlhood, when she had been left an orphan, dependent upon relatives, who considered they did all that could be expected of them, in procuring her admittance into a free school. At fifteen she had begun her working life as nursery governess, and had afterwards made her way on in the world by studying when she ought to have been asleep. Experience had rendered her a good judge of character, and her heart went out to Mabel, whom she believed to be something more than merely light-hearted, which was in itself but half a charm to her. That Mr. Leicester was at least as much impressed as she was herself was also apparent to her. She knew him too well to suppose that he was lingering there simply to watch the children playing "Mother Goose."

He was, in fact, uncomfortably conscious that it was an undignified proceeding for Edward Leicester, M.P., to be so much absorbed in watching a childish game, yet he could not tear himself away. It was only when the hot and tired fox was fain to confess himself beaten, and "Mother Goose" sat down to fan herself, that Mr. Leicester lifted his hat and turned away.

"Quite startled at the frivolity of the whole proceeding!" thought Mabel, her laughing eyes following his stiff, angular figure for a moment.

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Miss Temple bade the children, whose appetite for play seemed unflagging, find amusement for themselves awhile, and sat down by Mabel's side.

"I have been envying you your playing powers, Miss Leith."

"Have you really? I was afraid it would seem terribly childish to you, but Mr. Leicester looked so ridiculously stiff, and stupid, and conceited, that I felt bound to try to shock him."

Miss Temple smiled. "I do not think he is quite all that. A little proud and reserved, perhaps, but generous, and honourable, and——"

"Stiff, conceited, and stupid!" put in laughing Mabel.

Miss Temple laid her hand upon the other's arm. "Is it wise—can we afford to be quite so outspoken? Pardon me, but you are so much younger than I, and you seem even younger than you are. Will you give me the privilege of age, my dear, and let me advise you to take less decided views? Ah, no! I ought rather to say, be more reticent in giving expression to them."

"How kind—how very kind of you to take so much interest in me!" said Mabel, quite touched. "Do you know what the consequences will be if I fall in love with you? You will never escape me again—never!"

As they talked on, drawing nearer in spirit, becoming friends with the rapidity of intuition, rarely allowed free exercise when youth is gone and people have fenced themselves about against sudden friendships, they grew more communicative. Miss Temple learned that Mabel had a sister and aunt living in town—the latter engaged in some kind of mission work, and Mabel heard that Miss Temple had been for ten years engaged to a young man in the medical profession. He had obtained his diploma, but, for lack of means to purchase a practice, was obliged to act as assistant to a country surgeon until he could save enough out of his small salary to set up for himself, which was proving a very slow process.

"We are both so poor that there does not seem to be much chance for us to settle as yet, since we do not consider it right to rush into an improvident marriage. Meanwhile," with a little sigh, as she dwelt a moment on the thought, "my youth is gone, and he will have poor compensation, I tell him, for all his faithfulness and self-denial."

"That is just morbid," said Mabel, striving to keep back the tears that sprang to her eyes and to speak cheerily.

"He says it is, and declares he is quite satisfied. What is

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better still, he really seems to be satisfied, and that ought to cheer me, I know. It would be so much worse to feel he was regretting in any way, would it not?"

Mabel silently lifted the other's hand to her lips, understanding now what had brought the patient waiting expression to her face. Suddenly it occurred to her that she had it in her power to help Miss Temple, and she appreciated wealth as she had never before appreciated it. With radiant eyes, and a soft smile gathering about her lips, she dwelt for a few moments enjoyably on the thought. This, in in contrast with her previous ready sympathy, might have seemed a little strange had not Miss Temple been too much absorbed just then in the recollections which the relation of her story had called up, to notice how the other was looking. By an apparent chance question Mabel presently contrived to ascertain the name of Miss Temple's *fiancé* and that of the place where he lived. Afterwards the talk became more general again, and Mabel gratefully appreciated the other's kindly way of putting in a word of counsel whenever she could do so unobtrusively. When the time for parting came, both were feeling the better for the genial companionship.

"You have brought fresh air and sunshine into my colourless life," said Miss Temple, as they spoke a few last words at the lodge gate, whither she and the children had accompanied them. "How eagerly I shall look forward to our next meeting! Of course there will be a return visit for the children."

"Sunshine!" gaily echoed Mabel, "why, you are going to have nothing else. I foresee a speedy ending to all troubles, amidst orange-blossoms, white favours, and showers of rice." Adding to the children, growing more effusive as the time for parting arrived, "Come goslings."

The little Leicesters and Miss Temple stood waving their adieus at the lodge gates until the others had turned a bend of the road and passed out of sight.

Standing by a stile, leading to the field they had to cross, they came upon Mr. Leicester. He stiffly lifted his hat to Mabel and got a stiff little bend from her in return, as she wondered what had brought him there. With a slight gesture she declined to avail herself of his proffered assistance in stepping over the stile, not inclined to accept even this small service from him.

"I hope your little charges have not fatigued you with their games of play, Miss Leith."

"Oh, no, we can all get through a great deal in that way,

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Mr. Leicester," she replied, not so much impressed by his condescension as she was intended to be. "Some of us wish there were good marks given for play, do we not, Algy?"

"Yes, and prizes, too," he replied, his face brightening at the thought.

"I tell my little Roland that he ought to like work," said Mr. Leicester, with lofty condescension.

"But he doesn't," triumphantly returned Algy. "He told me so."

"In that case he cannot expect to become a gentleman and make a mark in the world."

"He doesn't want to do that either," promptly said Algy. "He says he would like to be a common child like Winkle. We told him about little Winkle, Miss Leith."

"And who is Winkle?" enquired Mr. Leicester, to prolong the time.

Mabel, who was beginning to enjoy the fun of seeing this stiff, pompous man unbending to Algy, gravely explained that Winkle was a young gentleman who dwelt in Fancy-land.

"And his father and mother were periwinkles," put in Algy.

"A sort of shell-fish?"

"No, wild flowers, you know; and so the garden flowers looked down upon Winkle and called him a common child, till one day——"

"A kind of fairy story, I suppose," grandiloquently put in Mr. Leicester. "Do you allow them to read that kind of fiction, Miss Leith?"

"Do not you approve of such reading, Mr. Leicester?" she demurely replied, her eyes downcast lest he should see the laughter in them.

This seemed more like deferring to his judgment. With a pleasant little stir in his mind, and in his most sententious manner, Mr. Leicester began to explain his grounds for objecting to children being allowed to read much fiction of any kind, and the less they heard of fairies and beings of the imagination only, the better.

"I do not agree with you—not at all," coolly returned Mabel, getting impatient and spoiling the effect, just as he was flattering himself that she was becoming duly impressed. "Imagination cannot be given simply to be repressed. There must be some reason why children are so easily touched that way, and there is no evidence of its being a bad way."

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"Do you find that they always incline to the best things, Miss Leith?"

"We like goodies and games of play," suggested Mima, to whom these were the best things.

Mr. Leicester smiled a little grimly, with a glance towards Mabel, as though to say she was answered. Much as he admired her, she rather shocked his sense of propriety. She certainly seemed lax in her notions respecting the training of children. Worse than this, she appeared utterly regardless as to what his opinion might, or might not be. Yet he lingered, inclined to catch at any excuse for prolonging the interview.

It was Mabel who dissolved the meeting. "Come, Algy and Mima, come, Sissy, say good-bye to Mr. Leicester; we must go on," making a little bow serve for her own leave-taking as she turned away.

He stood looking after her as she crossed the field—the children dancing along by her side and chattering gaily as they went—and asked himself if it had indeed come to that, and Edward Leicester had lost his heart to a girl he had seen but once—a girl in her position, hardly more than that of a nursery governess, and, for aught he knew, the daughter of some bankrupt nobody? He walked slowly homeward with a sense of having lost dignity in his own eyes, yet pausing every now and again to dwell upon the mental picture of "Queen Anne" crowned with flowers, or "Mother Goose," swaying to and fro with her skirts outspread and her face rosy with laughter, and telling himself what she might become under the guidance of such a mentor as himself.

Meanwhile he was unconsciously serving as a foil to a rival. Ever on the watch for such opportunities, Richard Noel had joined Mabel and the children on their way through the woods, and his suave, courteous manners and deferential tone created their full impression in contrast with Mr. Leicester's stiff pomposity. Strictly honourable in his dealings, liberal with money, and incapable of anything derogatory to his name and position, Mr. Leicester appeared to disadvantage in contrast with the inferior man, and this chiefly because his failings were evident, and the other's were not.

"How different!" thought inexperienced Mabel, contrasting the two men in her mind, as, after a few deferential words to her, Noel made himself pleasant with the children. They were thanking him for the pretty gifts which had duly arrived in

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fulfilment of his promise, not always the case when Uncle Richard promised things. With the gratitude which expresses "a lively expectation of favours to come," Algy was assuring his uncle that he had tried to behave better to Miss Leith—"since."

In a murmured aside, meant not to be unheard, Uncle Richard wondered how any one could possibly do less than their best for Miss Leith.

"But Miss Leith says we oughtn't to behave well for her sake, nor for presents, nor anything. else, but because it's right, uncle," put in earnest, thoughtful Sissy.

"It must always be right to be obedient to Miss Leith, because she herself is always right, Sissy."

Mabel gave him a smile and a confidential little shake of the head, meaning to intimate that Sissy was beginning to require better reasoning than this. In his ignorance of her, he imagined that, instead of putting his evident compliment aside, she accepted it, not averse from having her judgment considered infallible by the children, and flattered himself that he had found a way of establishing little confidences between them. That she was favourably impressed so far, seemed evident.

Already he had, by his little half-speeches about the "stupid pride and independence of a poor man, which stood so much in his way," contrived to enlist her sympathies. Much as she liked Aubyn, she was becoming confirmed in the impression that he did not quite do the other justice. He ought at any rate, she thought, to remember that Mr. Noel was a gentleman, and recognize that it was for the rich and prosperous man to take the initiative and make the advances, which the poor one could not do without rendering his motives liable to be misconstrued. Once she had spoken a word to Aubyn on the subject, asking him how it was that Mrs. Brandreth's brother did not go more frequently to the house. He seemed so genial and kind, and the children liked him so much.

Aubyn made some hesitating, not very definite reply, and changed the subject. He did not like Richard Noel, and on that very account objected to say anything about him. The man was down, and therefore, by no word of his would he add to the prejudice against him. Moreover, Aubyn would have helped him had he found it possible so to do. Richard Noel was quite aware that the other would be ready enough to extend a helping hand to him, did he make any honest effort to help himself.

Aubyn's tone and manner only strengthened Mabel's convic-

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tion that he was prejudiced. He did not seem able even to say a word in excusé or defence of his prejudice. On his side, Richard Noel was much too diplomatic to utter a word against Aubyn, appearing, indeed, more inclined to praise and admire him than otherwise, only blaming himself for the "stupid reticence and pride," which prevented him making stronger efforts to gain the other's good will.

So far everything seemed to be working in his favour with Mabel, and he was beginning to flatter himself that he would be clever enough to compass the rest. That he might be too clever did not occur to him. Unaccustomed to deal with such minds as hers, he did not recognize where her strength lay, and that frank, simple, and utterly inexperienced though she was, she might yet be as well armed against his designs as would be the most experienced woman of the world. The complicated machinery and petty manœuvres he was accustomed to depend upon would serve him not a whit should it become a trial of strength between them. He might have the power to weave a net of circumstances about her, embarrassing—even disastrous—in their consequences, but he would find she was none the more at his mercy on that account. Suffering might have to be borne, but hers was not the mind to be swayed by the Richard Noels of the world. Nor did she depend upon the song of a bird, a chance reminiscence of her childhood, or some sudden change in the aspect of nature to save her from herself at the right moment. In fine, she was, and ever would be, an enigma to such as he.

As they emerged from the woods he took leave, explaining, in reply to the children's protests and enquiries why he would not go further, that he had to catch a train in order to get back to work. The few hints he had given her about his work—hints that seemed to point to the conclusion that it was some treatise likely to be of value to the world—had interested her a great deal, and she had formed an agreeable little project for helping him in a quiet way when it should be ready for publication. He had taken rooms at a farmhouse just outside the town of Waybourne, and situated some six or seven miles distant by rail from Beechwoods, for a few months, for the purpose, it was given out, of carrying on his literary work in quiet retreat from society. Only his sister, perhaps, knew what his real object was.

Mrs. Severn, whose husband had held large estates in the neighbourhood, which, at his death passed to a nephew, spent some months of the year at Waybourne, where she and her

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daughter enjoyed all the prestige of their former position in the county. The acquaintance with Mrs. Brandreth's brother had seemed to come about naturally enough, but Mrs. Severn was unaware how frequently her daughter had of late been joined by Richard Noel in her walks about the place. Had the mother, whose estimate of him was very different from that of her daughter, suspected the meetings and what was likely to come of them, she would have been not a little troubled, although she could have done no more than protest. Flora Severn was six-and-twenty and had command of her own income. She believed, what he had taken so much pains to make her believe, that she was the attraction that kept him in that dull neighbourhood. She had already shown him that she was not inclined to put obstacles in his way, when Mabel Leith came upon the scene, and a more dazzling prospect seemed to open out to him.

Her mind full of her project, Mabel wrote a long letter that night to Dorothy, giving an account of her meeting with Miss Temple and doing her best to win her sister's sympathy, as her own had been won, by the story of the lovers and their long, patient waiting for the happiness which still seemed so far off. "It would be so delightful to give it to them—quite a grand opportunity for me, would it not be, Dorrie? Do help me to do it at once by lending me the money I want. Grant me this one more loan—it will have to be a big one, quite a thousand, I should think—until I come of age. Don't be afraid, and reasonable, and wanting to know things, dearie. Could you only see Miss Temple it would be quite enough to set your mind at rest as to the wisdom as well as kindness of giving her a helping hand, but since you cannot, just trust me. Read the enclosed letter, which I want you to take to our lawyer, and you will see how very practical and business-like your old Mab is becoming—quite an experienced diplomatist. It occurred to me that a small practice might be bought and offered to Mr. Worcester as though through the good offices of a grateful patient or something of that kind; but I have left the way of doing it to Mr. Grant, only stipulating for it to be arranged quietly, and so that they may not feel under a financial obligation to any one. Mr. Grant will manage it just as it should be if you go to him in your dear, earnest way, and show you are ready to advance the money."

(*To be continued.*)

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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

Jean and Edouard de Reszke—Notes from Paris.

With Jean and Edouard de Reszke at Home and Abroad.

The brothers De Reszke, whose appearance at Covent Garden is always looked upon as *the* event of the season, now that Adelina Patti has forsaken the historic boards where she won her first successes, are great admirers of England and the English, and never happier than when passing a few months in our midst. Nevertheless, since their avocation calls them away from their native Poland, they look upon their Paris *appartement* in the Rue d'Islay as a temporary home. Monsieur Jean, as becomes an elder brother and reigning tenor, here occupies a bachelor suite on the first floor, whilst Monsieur Edouard is domiciled *au troisième* with a wife and children. The house is conveniently situated for the Grand Opéra, where the brothers are usually engaged for the winter season. Although citizens of Paris, and Poles by nationality, there is a strong British element in the De Reszke household. Madame Edouard wisely inclines to engaging English nurses for her pretty little fair-haired daughter, whilst to English grooms and farm servants is entrusted the management of affairs on the Polish estate. Notwithstanding these predilections, Jean and Edouard are wont to dismiss all English dishes from their table, declaring our vaunted beefsteak and vegetables to be but a very tame substitute for their caviare and asparagus, beetroot and bouillon, and the favourite Polish mixture of oatmeal stewed with beef and gravy.

Like Mario before him, Jean de Reszke is an excellent connoisseur of works of art, and has furnished his Paris rooms with most distinguished taste. The windows are hung with wine-coloured draperies, the walls covered with a number of interesting studies in oil and water-colour, whilst a light, cunningly arranged above a Barbédienne bronze group, throws a glow over the beautiful Venetian mirrors and Louis XVI. furniture scattered over the room. Edouard is equally proud of his household gods, and would beg you to inspect with an almost naïve delight his great pictures of Verdi and other treasures accumulated during the course of his long and brilliant career.

The parents of Jean and Edouard de Reszke were both very well known in Warsaw society, Monsieur as Conseiller d'Etat, and Madame as possessing a splendid soprano voice. This gifted lady, a pupil, I am told, of Garcia and Viardot, and, entertaining largely in artistic circles, was looked upon as a great musical authority in the town. Little Jean's

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pride knew no bounds when his mother first agreed to give him music-lessons, and, with her, he delighted to assist at operatic performances night after night all through the Warsaw season. On Sunday mornings he was allowed to exercise his childish voice in the choir in the Catholic Chapel. After some years he commenced to study singing under Signor Cotogni at the Turin Conservatoire, and was brought over to London to hear Mario in a round of favourite parts—in itself a liberal education to the intelligent student. Young De Reszke was naturally fired by the performances of so truly great an artist, described by Théophile Gautier with his inimitable grace: "Comme un rossignol qui chante dans un bosquet . . . Il nous rappelle un beau berger grec chantant, en couplets altérnés au pied d'un laurier rose, Galatée la fugitive." The marvellous charm and entrain of Mario roused in Jean de Reszke a consciousness of what he himself might achieve; and under the influence of this enthusiasm he accepted an engagement to appear as Alfonso in "La Favorita" at the Venice Opera House. This was in the year 1874. As baritone, the most renowned of our operatic tenors first tried the wings on which he now sails so proudly. "It was the one folly of my life," he declares, a folly nevertheless scarcely to be marvelled at, when one remembers that just as in former days his baritone was universally pronounced a tenor, so now his tenor is frequently described of baritone *timbre*. It was through the advice of Signor Striglia that the young artist took fresh lessons and re-commenced his career as *primo-tenore*. The experiment was in every way justified, and in 1879 Jean de Reszke made his *début* in Madrid as "Roberto" in Meyerbeer's opera with amazing success. Massenet, most *difficile* of composers, immediately pressed him to undertake the leading part in such important operas as "Le Cid" and "Herodiade." Since that time the clever artist has appeared in every European capital, to win golden opinions and golden reward, his triumph culminating at the Grand Opéra in Paris a few seasons ago when creating the *rôle* of Romeo, on which occasion no less charming a Juliet than Adelina Patti smiled upon him from her lattice-window, and awoke in mingled joy and fear to die at the feet of so knightly a lover. Gounod's delight with Jean-Roméo knew no bounds, and although somewhat given to compliments, there was a real note of sincerity in the lines he penned across the photograph of himself with which he presented the illustrious tenor: "A mon cher et beau Roméo, Jean de Reszke, affection et admiration,—CHARLES GOUNOD."

Edouard, the younger brother, like Jean, was not destined for the stage, but, with him also, "genius would out." After having taken a course of lessons, first under his brother, and later on under several eminent masters, he made his first appearance at the "Ventadour"—most favourite of Paris opera-houses in bygone years—to be received with overwhelming cordiality. Of Edouard it can only be said that his talent is no way second to that of his brother; and when playing Mephistopheles to the Faust of Jean, it is a matter of perplexity to which

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to award the palm of excellence. Take, for instance, his performance of the comparatively uninteresting part of Count Rodolpho in "La Sonnambula." Played by Signor A., B. or C., we are half inclined to ridicule this distinguished personage when he arrives on the scene, accompanied by a great cracking of whips, dressed in sportsmanlike garments of questionable fashion, prepared to sing "Vi naviso"—a most wearisome and old-fashioned *cabaletta*, with which we would gladly enough dispense. Edouard de Reszke, however, makes the man live before us, with his courtly, high-bred manner, his respectful admiration for gentle Amina and chivalrous desire to disperse the cloud which darkens her fame. His exquisitely polished and expressive delivery of the long aria always arouses a storm of enthusiasm, and impels his hearer to forgive the tedium of the song for the sake of the singer.

The De Reszkes usually pass their time in Paris from the month of October until April or May, spend the summer in London, where they seek refuge at the Savoy or Continental Hotels, and after a short stay at Ems, they contrive to snatch a short holiday at Borovno, their old home in Poland, where they own an exceptionally fine stud-farm. Their love for animals is one of the strongest instincts of their nature, and, if it were possible, their passion for sport is more inherent than a devotion to the art of which they are such able masters. Like every member of the race from which they spring, the gifted Poles are imbued with a deep attachment to home and country, and it is well-nigh impossible to them to refrain from introducing continual reference during conversation to their doings in the good old times at Warsaw, where they were born and bred, and would fain pass their days, if fate had willed it so.

Little more remains to be told of Jean and Edouard de Reszke. Fortunately for us, we are now afforded an opportunity of seeing and hearing the great singers in a round of those parts which they have fairly made their own, and are furthermore gratified by an announcement that, besides his first appearance in Verdi's "Otello," Monsieur Jean will ere long display his powerful talent in Wagner's latest and most poetic work, "Siegfried."

Notes from Paris.

The omnibus strike was a curious feature of the last month, especially from the immense sympathy shown to the strikers, even by those most inconvenienced by their resolution. There was a strong feeling against the Company and their monopoly, of which it is universally admitted that too much advantage is taken. The men were hardly treated, overworked and under-paid; their claims were legitimate, and all wished them success. But Paris seemed strangely quiet without the heavy lumbering vehicles following each other in quick succession, which are now used by almost all classes, and which have become one of the most indispensable necessaries of Parisian life. Thirty years ago no lady

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would step into an omnibus; now only those having an unlimited use of their own carriages hesitate to avail themselves of a means of locomotion far safer than the "fiacres" (or "Petites Voitures," as they are now usually called), whose innumerable acccidents are proverbial.

It is a curious fact, perhaps not generally known, that the first originator of a plan establishing public vehicles open to all, and running regularly, was the grave philosopher Pascal, in the days of Louis XIV. One of his friends, the Marquis de Roanne, took up the suggestion, and in the year 1672 obtained a privilege for the undertaking. The first lines went from the Porte St. Antoine to the Luxembourg, and from the Place Royale (now Place de Vosges) to the Rue St. Honoré. Others took the circuit of Paris. The fare was five sous, which of course in those days represented a higher price than the modern thirty centimes. The speculation was successful for some time, but finally fell into disrepute, and failed; without any new attempt of the kind till the year 1828, when vehicles, containing fifteen seats, were established on the boulevards, and honoured by the patronage of the Duchesse de Berri. The fare was raised to six sous, and has remained unchanged up to the present time.

The success of the first lines induced the establishment of others by private enterprise in different parts of Paris. In 1854 the innovation of the "Impériale," or seats on the top of the omnibuses, was introduced and was much applauded. But it became evident at about the same time that while some lines were extremely prosperous, others not less useful made no money, and were even worked at a loss, which would enforce their final suppression. A society was now formed, proposing to buy up all the lines, and to work them under one management; the prosperous lines being taken as a compensation for those making less money. The offer was accepted, and the present "Compagnie Générale des Omnibus" was officially established in February 1855. Since then the monopoly has been absolute; and although the privilege causes some grumbling, and possibly too much indifference to the wishes and needs of the public, yet it is admitted that it is indispensable for the regular working of the lines, many of which could not subsist without the system of compensation.

The men employed by the Company are, generally, steady and honest; but they were not well treated, and they really asked for no more than their due, which the Company has been forced to grant; each day of strike entailing a loss of 100,000 francs (£4000). In addition, according to their contract, the monopoly would have been forfeited if the interruption of service had lasted beyond a fixed time. The men behaved very well on the whole, but they were thoroughly determined, and it is much to be regretted that the Company began such a struggle, instead of at once granting reasonable demands; for successful strikes may have dangerous consequences, and are at any rate a bad precedent.

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The election of "Pierre Loti" (*alias* Julien Viaud) to the honours of the "Académie Française" has caused general surprise, the merit of his highly coloured pictures of Japanese life not being considered sufficient, despite their graceful prettiness, to justify admission amongst the "Immortals." Monsieur Viaud will probably be no less surprised himself when the news reaches him, for he seemed to have such a small chance when he left Paris to resume his duties as first lieutenant in the French navy. Other names of really more distinguished candidates had been put forward; but there was a sort of feeling that the successor of Octave Feuillet ought to be a novelist; so that, practically, on this occasion the choice lay between "Pierre Loti" and Zola, against whom there is strong opposition. Many members consider that in consequence of the style of Zola's works, his election would amount to a disgrace, affecting the credit of the "Académie" itself. He is, however, powerfully supported by Alexander Dumas, whose influence is very great, and many fear that, notwithstanding the resistance of his opponents, he will finally work his way into the sacred precincts of "la docte Compagnie."

To those who would like to have some idea of Zola's style without paying too dearly for the initiation, we may mention the novel called "Le Bonheur des Dames," a graphic account of the great Parisian shops, and their organization, worked into a story, which is free from the more repulsive features of his other writings, and may amuse the general reader. The shop especially depicted is said to be "Le Printemps."

The great problem of judicious assistance to the needy, without encouraging professional pauperism, has been forcibly brought forward in consequence of the terrible distress of last winter, which called forth so much sympathy and such generous efforts to provide efficacious relief. Large sums were subscribed, and refuges were open in different parts of Paris, where all who applied found warmth, shelter, and food. But while "good Samaritans" rejoiced over the relief thus given, experienced philanthropists soon discovered the evils of indiscriminate assistance.

The vagabonds admitted were not easily kept in order; promiscuity had bad results, while the numbers of applicants increased daily in such proportions, that it was easy to foresee the time when all the tramps dispersed through the country would pour into Paris, seeking the delights of being maintained in idleness.

A great and praiseworthy effort is being now made to procure work, instead of giving alms indiscriminately.

It has been proved, in Paris as elsewhere, that when men or women have once conquered the shame which should restrain them from street begging, the life has a strange attraction, and is besides often much more profitable than the wages of honest work. A gentleman belonging to one of the charitable societies states, that by way of experiment, he

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once actually dressed in rags, and tried his fate as a beggar, with the result of a profit amounting to fifteen francs for that one day! It is probable that, notwithstanding his disguise, he had retained enough of respectability in his appearance to seem particularly interesting. But, quite recently, another gentleman, holding an official post in a Government relief committee, played the part of aged beggar so successfully, that a discriminating policeman turned him away from the door of a church, with the information that he (the policeman) was not hard on beggars, but that in this case he would not allow *this* beggar to stand there, because he "looked like a ruffian!" "Vous avez une figure de bandit!"

The compliment caused intense delight, but mixed with disappointment at the failure of the experiment; for in a few minutes thirteen sous had been received, which, as the service had not yet begun, promised a good harvest. It is stated that the average day of a professional beggar in Paris brings in from five francs to fifteen!

With a view to assisting cases of real want and preventing the spread of pauperisation, the question of help by work ("l'Assistance par le Travail") is being carefully examined. The success of an establishment for women directed by Sisters, on this principle, which has been already mentioned here in a former paper,* has suggested the plan of trying the same experiment in the case of men, and requiring a return in the shape of work appropriated to their capabilities, in exchange for the assistance given. It may be said that this is simply the workhouse system; but it is proposed to give work to do more useful and less painful than the oakum-picking of English prisons and workhouses, and to employ the men, as far as possible, according to their trades. The hopeless tramps and vagabonds are already employed as scavengers, but, according to French military habits, not left to their own devices but regularly enrolled in sets, and subject to discipline and rule.

A refuge has been established in the Rue Chavel, under the direction of M. Robin, where shelter is given to workmen out of employ. During the mornings they are left free to seek work; but in the afternoon they must perform a given task in exchange for food and lodging. At present the experiment seems successful.

The establishment for women has the advantage of good example, as an encouragement; ladies attend, who work with the inmates and teach them. This is of course more difficult with men's trades or labour; and yet it would be well if something could be done to remove the impression that gentlemen claim the privilege of absolute idleness for themselves, whilst greatly shocked if others do not work.

We may recommend for family reading: "Le roman de Jeanne," by la Ctesse. Serrurier; "Claudie," by B. Reyac; "Le Triomphe de Jean Bréval," by Mme. Schlumberger, *née* De Witt.

* "L'Hospitalité du Travail," Avenue de Versailles.

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OUR LIBRARY LIST.

LIFE AND LETTERS OF ROBERT BROWNING. By MRS. SUTHERLAND ORR. (*Smith, Elder & Co.*) Mr. Browning has but too lately gone from us for any impartial estimate of his genius and influence to be possible, but when the time comes for such a judgment, this record of his personality, as it appeared to an intimate friend, will be of the highest value. Mrs. Orr's work has evidently been a labour of love and there is a directness and simplicity in her method of treatment, which compares favourably with many longer and more pretentious biographies. Of the poet's own letters she gives us but few, in deference, no doubt, to his own often-expressed dislike to the violation of the sanctities of private life; but we have here several of Mrs. Browning, which have a charm all their own. Her pen gives us a graphic account of the perfect happiness of the Italian life of the husband and wife, so strangely brought together, and it is to her that we owe the few glimpses granted to us of her husband's literary predilections. For, after all, the Robert Browning of this biography is little more than the poet as he appeared to a large circle of more or less casual acquaintance. His private life, his friendships, his thoughts on the deeper problems of human life and destiny, with characteristic reserve he gave to the world only impersonally in his poems. His was not the nature to take the world into his confidence, and his biographer has respected his known wishes. From the point of view of the general reader this is a matter for regret, but perhaps for such a revelation the time is not yet. We can only be grateful to Mrs. Sutherland Orr for what she has done, and pay a passing tribute to the literary power and insight revealed in the few critical passages which interrupt the course of her narrative.

LAURENCE OLIPHANT. By MARGARET OLIPHANT. (*William Blackwood.*) Mrs. Oliphant had a unique and fascinating subject for her biographical sketch, and she has treated it *con amore*, and given us two volumes of which every word will be read with interest and sympathy. From the opening chapters, treating of Laurence Oliphant's brilliant and many-sided youth and early manhood, to the pathetic and beautiful close, shrouded in a mystery which we approach in a spirit of reverent wonder (not untouched with pity), our attention is

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arrested and our sympathy awakened by a personality as rare as it was loveable, a genius as varied as it was exuberant, and a career as unique as it was bewildering. The friend of princes, the counsellor of statesmen, the keen social satirist, the financier, the man of vast designs and indomitable energy, the *persona grata* of London society—all these striking and brilliant qualities pale in interest before the "holy and humble man of heart," the visionary mystic, the preacher of a new and strange faith. By one side of his nature, Laurence Oliphant dazzles our imagination and arouses our latent love of adventure, by the other he appeals to our deepest sympathies and our highest aspirations by his consistent sacrifice of the Temporal for the Eternal (as it seemed to him), and of the Seen for the Unseen. We may not be able to understand or enter into the arguments which led to so strange a result as his complete withdrawal from a sphere which he was made to adorn; our reason and good sense must repudiate much in his scheme of existence which our feelings can only partially comprehend, but behind everything is a dominant admiration for what the biographer truly describes, as "the beautiful and blameless lives" of two natures so rare as Laurence Oliphant and his wife. For the second volume of the biography is devoted as much to an account of the wife as of the husband, and deepens in interest as it deals with the aims and aspirations, the work and "use" (we quote her own expression) of that gifted and gracious woman, "a spirit yet a woman too." We could wish that more light had been thrown on the inexplicable element in the book, the unbounded influence of "the Prophet" Harris; but probably no explanation would have been wholly satisfactory. We also regret that more of the letters were not quoted in their entirety.

ERIC BRIGHTEYES. By J. RIDER HAGGARD. (*Longmans, Green & Co.*) In his introduction, Mr. Rider Haggard tells us that his romance is founded on the Icelandic Sagas, and expresses a hope that his story may lead people to a study of the early epics of our race. That he himself has studied them with enthusiasm, and been fired by their poetry, can be doubted by no one who reads his story. Eric Brighteyes has been inspired by the heroism, the Homeric directness and simplicity (with its strong dash of northern savagery) of the primitive long-forgotten life of our Norse forefathers, with its record of daring and disaster, of loyalty and treachery, of love and hate. How much in this modern Saga is *Wahrheit* and how much *Dichtung* we do not know, and consequently antiquarian interest does not add to, or detract from our pleasure in this strong tale of adventure, among untrodden snows of fiction. At first startling events and the triumphs of Eric over all foes follow too closely on each other, the canvas is somewhat over-crowded with dead and dying victims, and the hero's victorious career is too assured. But towards the middle of the book we feel the tread of doom close on the footsteps of Eric Brighteyes, from henceforth Eric the

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Unlucky. The tragic element of a strong man contending against Fate, deepens and heightens the interest of the story, and we feel that the key-note of the *Dichtung* lies in its *Wahrheit*, in the futility of human effort against destiny, in the grandeur of hope uncrushed by visible failure, in the triumph of love over death. Stirring and animated as are the fights by sea and land, and powerful as is the treatment of the magic element in the machinations of Swanhild, part witch, part woman, we feel that it is in some of the love-scenes between Eric and Gudruda the Fair, and in the parting scene between Eric and Skallagrim, that the permanent human interest of the book is to be found.

KHALED: A TALE OF ARABIA. By F. MARION CRAWFORD. (*Macmillan & Co.*) Mr. Crawford's new Arabian tale has not got the same delicate charm which made "A Cigarette-maker's Romance" so perfect a work of art, but it has merits of its own, chief amongst which is its excellent workmanship. Khaled is one of the genii converted to the faith by Mohammed, and in response to his desire to win a human soul, he is allowed to be clothed with man's shape, and to essay his fortunes in a mortal sphere. Should he succeed in winning the love of the Princess Zehowah he will gain all he wishes. The story deals with the fortunes of Khaled in his wooing and wedding of the Princess. She admires his manliness and his prowess in arms, but it is only when despair seems to be staring him in the face, and when all his auxiliaries are in open insurrection against him, that at length her love is won for the man as apart from the successful general and ruler. The final scene, at the end of which the Princess makes the avowal of her devotion, is a studied piece of writing, in which Mr. Marion Crawford's literary gifts are especially conspicuous. The story as a whole, however, though subtle and clever, will hardly be as popular as some of the other works of this distinguished novelist.

CREATURES OF CIRCUMSTANCE. By HORACE G. HUTCHINSON. (*Longmans & Co.*) We knew that Mr. Hutchinson could write of cricket and golf with the authority of one who knows, but the three volumes before us, besides confirming that estimate of his powers, go far to show that he is capable of producing a really excellent and original novel. Certain signs of haste, such as the repetition of what is practically the same scene, and a tendency to let the different parts of the story stand rather too far apart, detract from the merits of "Creatures of Circumstance" as a work of art, but there is a force and a pitiful truth in the consequences of Robert's well-meant and too successful attempt to destroy in the woman he loves that passion for himself which bids fair to be her undoing. The first volume, with its record of village cricket and rustic humour, has a distinctly autobiographical flavour, and the circumstances which lead to the separation of the boy and girl lovers are only too natural. The sadness of the story is somewhat relieved by

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the introduction of American 'cuteness in the person of young Mr. Cheadle, whose father's surprising familiarity with the shadier side of the financial world gives occasion for the exercise of all his son's natural shrewdness. The scenes between the two have a certain flavour of Charles Dickens' creations.

MISS DEVEREUX, SPINSTER. By AGNES GIBERNE. (*Longmans & Co.*) Miss Giberne has made a discovery, which, "to put it shortly," is "that in the gauging of an individual, one must allow not only for the Inborn, but also for the Inbred." Consequently she spoils what might have been an excellent story by the reiteration in any number of forms of this surprising information. We feel some interest in the middle-aged young lady who gives her name to the book, in the chivalrous General Villiers, and in Jean Trevelyan, the strong, high-principled girl whose influence does so much to call out all that is best in Miss Devereux's spoiled nephew. But we are possessed by an overpowering sense of weariness when upon every third page we come across a dissertation upon the effect of environment upon character, and, against our better judgment, are ready to give this "study of development" our unqualified condemnation. In justice, however, let us say that almost all the characters are excellently drawn, and that when Miss Giberne is content to let them work out their own development, she writes with power and pathos.

A NEW ENGLAND NUN, AND OTHER STORIES. By MARY E. WILKINS. (*Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.*) Any one of these stories singly would create a more favourable impression than do the whole collectively. They are marked by a quiet tenderness, and a power of sympathetic insight into the capabilities of commonplace lives which give them a distinctive character. But they all have the same character, and when one note is continuously struck, the ear becomes wearied by the monotony, and though we like especially the "New England Nun," and "A Poetess," our leading idea on closing the volume is that only a very few authors should venture upon the publication of a collection of their stories.

THE MARQUESS OF DALHOUSIE. By SIR W. HUNTER. (*Clarendon Press.*) We know few writers who contrive to present so vivid a picture, whilst at the same time conveying so much information about subjects generally considered uninteresting, as the editor of the "Rulers of India" biographies. The driest details of Indian administration are invested with a halo of romance when viewed in the light of his enthusiasm, and it is no wonder, therefore, that a life like that of Lord Dalhousie, covering as it does the interesting period preceding the Mutiny, should inspire his pen. Lord Dalhousie's work may be summed up in the three words, "conquest, consolidation, and

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development." To him we owe the Punjaub, and the foundation of our Burmese Empire; but, more than this, it is to him that we owe the first application to Indian affairs of the maxim "that Government is not designed for the profit of princes, but for the welfare of the people." The railways, of which Sir Edwin Arnold said that "they may make India a nation," were largely due to his enterprise and determination, as were also the telegraph, the half-penny post, and the first beginning of that system of education which, more than anything else, has contributed to the unification of India. The foolish accusations brought against him when, a year after his retirement, broken down in health and old at forty-five, the news of the Mutiny flashed through the length and breadth of the land, are here completely disproved, whilst it is incidentally shown that to a neglect of his advice we may trace many of the evils culminating in that terrible rising.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN. By CAPT. A. H. MARKHAM. (*G. Philip & Son.*) There is a peculiar fitness in the choice of one who has himself ventured his life in the great frozen seas to tell the story of that "heroic sailor soul" who was to find his last resting-place far away in "the white North." No romance could be more thrilling or more pathetic than the account of the long search for the North-West passage, ending with its discovery only when the great explorer himself was at the point of death, and too late to save the lives of his ill-fated followers. Captain Markham tells his tale in plain, unvarnished fashion, as becomes a man of action, and though we might perhaps have wished for a rather more lavish expenditure of literary graces, his simplicity inspires confidence in the truth of the inferences which must supply the lack of information concerning the journey whence no traveller returned. He has collected much that is valuable of Franklin's early voyages, and his book will serve as a manual of Arctic exploration.

GEORGE MEREDITH. By HANNAH LYNCH. (*Methuen & Co.*) Miss Hannah Lynch has expanded a successful lecture upon her favourite master in fiction into a volume of a hundred and seventy pages, and the result is a good deal of repetition. But she evidently studied Mr. Meredith's style to some purpose, for occasionally she produces upon her readers much the same bewildering effect, and there are some sentences, notably one upon p. 16, which we confess our inability to parse. Having said this, however, and having uttered a mild protest against the low opinion of the average intellect which leads her on p. 132 so carefully to explain a comparatively simple observation of her master, we may allow ourselves to be grateful for her sympathetic interpretation of a much misunderstood writer. Readers of Mr. Meredith will recognize the truth of many of her criticisms, and the outside world can hardly fail to be drawn within the charmed circle, if they are so fortunate as to come across her analysis of his novels.

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THE STORY OF PORTUGAL. By H. MORSE STEPHENS. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) This is not, we think, one of the most successful volumes of this excellent series. The history of Portugal is a theme in itself romantic and interesting; but Mr. Morse Stephens has rather the air of writing for our instruction than of being himself inspired by the subject, though the volume has been, according to himself, "a labour of love." Many parts of it, however, dealing as they do with the relations between England and Portugal, will have a special interest for our countrymen at the present time, and perhaps a consideration of the past services of Portuguese navigators as pioneers in the army of European colonists will do something to allay the irritation inevitably produced by the African difficulties. The volume bears traces of much careful study, and perhaps some day the author may give us the complete history of Portugal, which is so much to be desired.

A LITTLE BOOK OF PROFITABLE TALES. A LITTLE BOOK OF WESTERN VERSE. By EUGENE FIELD. (*Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.*) These two little volumes are as attractive within as without, and their dainty binding shows on the part of the publisher a fitting sense of the delicate grace of their contents. The Christmas fairy tales might have come straight from the land of elves and gnomes, and have all the flavour of the pine woods so dear to the readers of Hans Andersen. But charming as they are in their delicate play of fancy, we feel that on American soil they are exotics, and perhaps it is this feeling which makes us prefer those Western tales with which the volume concludes, one of which, "The Little Yaller Baby," reminds us of Mr. Bret Harte at his best. Nor do we think that, in the volume of verse, "The Conversazzhyong" and "Casey's Table d'Hôte" would greatly suffer by comparison with such gems as "The Ballad of Truthful James."

MICHAEL VILLIERS, IDEALIST, AND OTHER POEMS. By E. H. HICKEY. (*Smith, Elder & Co.*) As happens so often, the longer poem, which gives Miss Hickey's new volume its title, strikes the ordinary reader as the least successful of the collection. We feel a certain interest in the fortunes of Michael Villiers, Idealist, and we may add, Democrat and Socialist, but our interest would have been quite as great if his story had been told us in prose, to which indeed some lines in the poem come perilously near. But in "Autographs," "Utopia," "Una and Duessa," and many of the shorter poems, Miss Hickey attains a far higher poetic level, a phenomenon which confirms us in our preconceived opinion that poetry and politics go not well together.

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MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST, 1891.

TWO VISITS TO THE WEST COAST OF CONNAUGHT.

BY MISS BALFOUR.

DURING the past year I have been twice through some of the poorest and most congested districts of Mayo and Galway, and I propose in the present paper, not to give a continuous narrative of either journey, but, without adhering to any strictly chronological order, to give a short account of some of our experiences in the less known and more inaccessible parts of the West Coast and islands which I then saw. It would take too much space for one article were I to attempt to describe our visits to the not less interesting districts of Connemara and the Donegal Highlands, or to give any detailed account of the work being carried on for the relief of distress, which was the occasion of Lady Zetland's tour last April; but these may possibly be treated of hereafter.

My first visit to the West of Connaught was in company with the Chief Secretary, at the end of October 1890, when we spent several days driving from place to place on outside cars, stopping frequently to have a few words of conversation with the men digging the potatoes in the fields by the roadside, and to examine the quality of their crops; visiting the priests of the various villages on our route, and discussing with them and others the best methods of meeting the impending distress and the more permanent difficulties of congestion; sometimes being met by eager and curious crowds, who, after listening to a few words from the Chief Secretary, sped the party on its way with cheers and blessings; and having driven forty to sixty miles a

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day, sometimes in pouring rain, often reaching our destination after dark.

My visit in April with Lady Zetland presented a great contrast to this. Instead of rain varied by hail and wind, we had brilliant sunshine and glassy sea. Where we had formerly seen the rotten potato crops being dug up, we now saw good seed, procured through the Boards of Guardians, being put into the ground. The results of the careful investigations as to the relief of distress were shown in the numbers of men working on piers, roads and railways; and everywhere we were met with addresses of welcome, full of strong expressions of gratitude for the work given by Government and the help received from the Irish Distress Fund. The ground covered by the two tours was by no means the same. Except to visit Achill, Mr. Balfour did not leave the mainland. Lady Zetland's tour, on the contrary, was chiefly among the larger islands along the coast. The peninsula of the Mullet, forming the extreme north-western portion of the County of Mayo, and almost separated from it by the great land-locked harbours of Broadhaven and Blacksod Bay, was visited on both occasions, but the Chief Secretary only visited the northern part and Lady Zetland the southern part of the district.

The Chief Secretary's visit to this dreary spot took place on one of the stormiest days in which I have ever been out. It had been intended that we should go that day in the gunboat *Banterer*, which was lying in Blacksod Bay, round Achill Head to Dooega; but when Captain Roper left us on the previous evening, after having arranged this programme for the next morning, he found that the sea was even then too rough for him to get back to his ship; and all night long the wind blew a gale, accompanied by thunder and violent hail-showers, so that next morning, to the great satisfaction of some of the party, it was considered quite out of the question to go to Achill by sea. This gave us a day to spend on the Mullet, and we started off across it with the usual little procession of outside cars, well wrapped in waterproofs, and the men of the party in hideous black Mackintosh "sou'-westers" tied under their chins. Not having gone through a weary apprenticeship with bonnet-ribbons, some of them were wholly incapable of dealing with their strings themselves; and I longed to be able to reproduce the scene, especially after our return in the afternoon, when with numbed fingers they feebly fumbled to undo each other's strings, while the wet trickled down their faces, crimson and purple with the wind and hail.

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The Mullet forms part of the Barony of Erris, famed for such a complete absence of trees, that Arthur Young, in his "Tour in Ireland," tells a story of a youth who, on leaving the Barony, saw a tree for the first time in his life, and asked his father with astonishment what it could be? The district which the Chief Secretary's party now went through consisted chiefly, as far as I could see in the intervals between the hail-showers, of long stretches of bog-land with a low range of heathery hills beyond. Here and there we passed a few wretched-looking cottages, usually consisting merely of four rough stone walls, an earthen floor, and a thatched roof fastened down with straw-ropes, and frequently without a chimney. Most of the people own a few cattle, but they looked thin and in bad condition, even in autumn, and in spring were miserable objects. The black and white pigs, too, which infest the roads, doing their best to get run over by every passing vehicle, looked leggy and lanky, and would be scorned by any farmer on this side of the Channel. Indeed, the only domestic animals which appear thoroughly happy are the geese, of which there are large numbers; but even these are small in size compared to those in the more well-to-do parts of the country. The roads, as is usual when made over bog, are raised some feet above the level of the surrounding land, with deep wide trenches on each side. These bog roads are as springy as if made of india-rubber, so that you can see them move under the pressure of the wheels. I was at first somewhat surprised on hearing of "men hiding *behind* the ditch," till I found that the name "ditch" was applied to the turf banks bordering these trenches on the landward side. Some of the Mullet roads were made as Relief works in 1848, and the population having considerably diminished since then, they are little used and are gradually becoming impassable.

As we approached the Coast Guard Station on the north-east of the peninsula, the land got more and more marshy—a veritable winter paradise for web-footed birds. A few small flocks of wild geese of several species were already here, but the wild swans and many others had not yet arrived from the north. The coast guardsmen welcomed us warmly. We left our cars at their station, and prepared to walk across the links to where the Atlantic waves were breaking over the rocks, but no sooner had we left the shelter of the house wall than the wind caught us with a fury that made management of skirts an

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impossibility, and I was obliged to stay behind. With bent heads to avoid the stinging sand, and with slow steps struggling against the gale, the rest of the party started. Their return journey was at a run, with coats ballooned like sails in front of them. On our way back we branched off along one of the "'48" roads to a little fishing village rejoicing in the unromantic name of Tip. It is little more than a row of small whitewashed huts, out of which the inhabitants hurriedly issued as we came up, all looking with interest and curiosity at the Chief Secretary, while the women gave me the kindest invitations to come in and get warmed and dried at their fires. But there was no time to spare for this, and after we had been taken to see the entrance to the harbour, the Chief Secretary was surrounded by the fishermen, eager to spend the few minutes left to us in talking to him and showing him their "curraghs," or canvas canoes, while they explained their mode of construction and use. Blind Harbour, on the bank of which the village stands, is a sea-lough something over a mile long, with a very narrow opening, through which, when we saw it, the sea was running like a torrent, raising the level of the water near the entrance more than a foot each time a big wave broke outside. Through wind and spray we struggled round the point forming the neck of the harbour, and the most tremendous breakers I ever saw burst suddenly on our view. One of our party profanely likened them to the roof of the Crystal Palace. The roar was so great that we could hardly hear ourselves speak, while the sea, which had the effect of being at a higher level than ourselves, looked as though it must pour down upon us and overwhelm us every instant.

It was on a very different day that I visited the Mullet for the second time, in April with Lady Zetland. As we drove from Elly Bay to Belmullet the sea lay beside us almost without a ripple, reflecting an occasional white cloud in the blue sky. The dark purple and brown of the bog-land was exchanged for pale ochreous fields, in which the young spring green was just beginning to show. The sun shone brightly on the golden gorse. Lambs, no bigger than cats, were disporting themselves on the turf bank, and innumerable larks were singing overhead. But the squalid village of Binghamstown, which we presently passed, with its ruinous remains of pretentious buildings, and the deserted-looking modern castle with its long line of curtain walls, reminded us too surely that we were still in the distressful country. Abundant evidence that the efforts of the Government

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to avert distress in the district had been appreciated was given in the wonderfully cordial way in which Lady Zetland was now received. Bonfires lined the route, and heaps of flaming straw were tossed up by the men and women as we passed. At Belmullet the Canal bridge and the town were decorated with evergreens and flags. The market place was crowded, and the cheers resounded again and again as Father Hewson, accompanied by the Rector, Mr. Clarke, read out addresses of welcome, expressing the gratitude of those who had benefited by Relief works and by the Irish Distress Fund.

To return to our November expedition. Mr. Balfour's party drove to Achill the day following the one spent on the Mullet. On reaching the Sound, as the narrow, river-like channel is called which divides the island from the mainland, a considerable crowd ran to meet us at the door of the little hotel, and when we presently came out again, Father O'Connor called for three cheers for the Chief Secretary, which were given loudly and with much enthusiasm and waving of hats. Standing bare-headed on the step, with Father O'Connor beside him, Mr. Balfour spoke a few words expressing his distress at the failure of the potato crop, and his desire to help the people by the new Railway about to be made between Westport and Achill. Interjections of blessing and thanks from the crowd accompanied his remarks, and renewed cheers at the close followed us as we drove away across the bridge over the Sound. Public speaking was an unlooked-for development in our tour, but this proved only the first of many speeches Mr. Balfour made to enthusiastic crowds assembled to meet him on his route. He spoke again that evening at Dooega, where he was warmly welcomed ; but as Mrs. Harvey, our kind hostess for the night, in whose dog-cart I was then driving, turned back owing to the bad state of the road, I did not hear him. The condition of this road is a striking illustration of recent Irish history. Some years ago the inhabitants of Dooega refused to pay their rents, and on hearing that the Sheriff with a protecting force on cars was on the way to seize their cattle in satisfaction of the decree obtained against them, they proceeded to cut trenches across the road several feet in width and depth, thus effectually preventing the cars from getting further, as the bog on either side was equally impassable. The crisis being over, the gaps were filled by the simple process of throwing in a few boulders, which is all the repair the road had received for the two years previous to our driving along it.

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During the past winter it has been put in thorough order, as one of the Relief works; and probably some of the people who destroyed it are the very people whose families have been kept from want by its renewal.

The Railway from Westport which Mr. Balfour promised when speaking at Achill Sound in October was in full course of construction when Lady Zetland's party, five months afterwards, drove through the district; and as the line is to run close to the road for much of the way, we constantly saw rows of men wheeling earth in barrows, standing in dark relief against the sky on the embankments, or grouped with spade and pickaxe in the cuttings. Now and then we saw the neat-looking iron huts provided for those of the men who lived too far off for them to return home at night. These huts, with their boarded floors and large windows, look so infinitely preferable to the dark and dirty hovels that the people usually live in, that one would have expected quite a rush to get the chance of sleeping in them; but this has not proved to be the case. There is a difficulty in getting them occupied at all; and though I frequently heard cheers for Mr. Balfour for giving work on the Railway, I only once during the whole tour heard "three cheers for Mr. Balfour's huts." It was a dark night and pouring torrents of rain at the time, which may have caused this unusual appreciation of their advantages.

On the bridge at Achill Sound an arch had been put up in Lady Zetland's honour, with the word "Welcome" ingeniously formed of shovels and picks, and decorated with evergreens and flags, as were the houses on either side; and a large crowd, cheering and shouting, accompanied us as we walked across. The drive from here to Dugort, on the north side of the island, where we were to sleep, was over heather and bog for miles, one or two very miserable-looking villages being visible on the distant hillside. Every now and then a knot of people would meet us on the road, following the carriage and handing in petitions. One man complained bitterly of not being employed on the Relief works, and appeared to think that his grievance in this particular was greatly increased by the fact that he had six cows and had sold one. He enlarged on these topics at considerable length, sternly repressing any one else who attempted to put in a word when he was obliged to stop for a moment to draw breath. Very ragged, squalid, and dirty, most of them looked, and one could easily imagine what I was told was the case, that there was much deformity and disease in some of the wretched

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little hamlets in the island. It was getting dark as Lady Zetland's party reached Dugort, but there was still light enough to see the arches of evergreens, with the words "God save the Queen" and "Welcome," and the lines of flags stretched across the road and floating from the house-tops, while the whole population seemed to have come out to greet us with enthusiastic cheers as our break-and-four dashed up to the door of the little hotel. Dugort is a much more prosperous-looking place than any we had seen since we left the Sound, and can boast of houses with slate roofs and two stories. Close above it rises the peak of Slievemore; and here tradition tells the story of an adventurous man who used every year to rob the eagles of their young, and who on one occasion, when defending himself from the old birds, severed with his sickle most of the strands of the rope by which he hung, and whose hair turned white during the long-drawn peril of his subsequent ascent.

Achill and the neighbouring parts of the mainland are exceedingly like parts of the Highlands of Scotland in outline and colouring, but the climate is very different. In a country so utterly forlorn, so bleak and bare, where the nearest approach to a tree is an old stump in a bog, it comes upon one as a shock to find fuchsias, Pernettias crimson with berries, myrtles, hydrangeas, lemon-scented verbenas with stems as thick as a man's arm, New Zealand flax, and even aloes, luxuriating in the open air wherever any one has cared to grow them. Every turf bank at the side of the roads has the *Osmunda regalis* growing on it; and great patches of indigenous Mediterranean heath flourish in sheltered places.

The *Hawk*, a steamer which has been chartered by Government for carrying supplies to the islands while the exceptional distress continues, and which was now put at Lady Zetland's disposal, was lying in the bay, and next morning we steamed to Belmullet, visiting Inishkea on the way back. The Southern island of Inishkea, on which we landed, is low and flat, with no marked features of any kind. As we came to anchor off the little bay on which the village is situated, numbers of curraghs put off to meet us, and soon the *Hawk* was surrounded with them dashing through the water, their excited owners seeming to take no heed as to which way they were going or what might be in front of them, but yet avoiding collisions as if by magic. Escorted by them, we were rowed to the little pier, the additions to which now being made are part of the Govern-

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ment Relief works. The inhabitants crowded to meet us there, with the warmest demonstrations of welcome, the so-called "Kings" of the two islands in the forefront; and thus surrounded by men, women, and children all talking Irish at once, we walked along to the nearest cabins. The head of the little bay, with its sandy beach, is lined with miserable little hovels of the usual type. The doorways are so low that one has to stoop to get into them, while inside almost the only light comes, blue and dim, down the chimneys, or rather holes that do duty as such. It was not easy to distinguish anything in the dusk of the interiors, but there was not often much to distinguish. Chairs, tables, and beds were conspicuous by their absence; a rough bench, a stool or two, some straw, or a heap of rags in a corner, usually making up all the furniture; while a single room provided shelter, not merely for the whole family, but for all the live-stock of which it was possessed. Outside not a vestige of green was visible anywhere, the surroundings being of a uniform grey drab tone. On one side of the bay were a number of tiny potato patches, enclosed by tumbledown walls, looking more like divisions in an ill-made chessboard than anything else, but useful to protect the potatoes from the cutting Atlantic winds. Last season's potatoes had failed here as elsewhere, and the islanders had eaten all those that should have been kept for seed. The Belmullet Board of Guardians, who, in common with other Boards, have many difficulties to contend with in providing the various kinds of potato to suit the particular fancies of different localities, could not supply them with "Lumpers," which they wanted, until May, too late for planting. "Champions," a variety very largely used in the country, are objected to on this island, partly on account of the height of the haulms exposing them too much to the winds. Before we left the West we had the satisfaction of hearing that the "Lumpers," which had been promised by Lady Zetland, were on their way out. Dreary and depressing as was the appearance of the island, the appearance of its inhabitants was even more so. Ragged and faded garments we had seen before, but so large a proportion of persons either lame or hunch-backed, dwarfed or deficient in intellect, blind of an eye, or with terrible disfigurements of face and skin, I never saw before, and hope never to meet again. One man only did I note as being of a fine type physically, and he, I was afterwards told, was not a native, but having married an islander had settled there. This miserable

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state of affairs is said to be due partly to too close inter-marriage —the islanders until within the last fifty years rarely marrying except among themselves—and partly to the demoralization attending on potheen-making, or illicit distilling of whiskey, which it is to be feared prevails to a considerable extent. The difficulties in detecting its manufacture in remote islands such as these are very exceptional, as, owing to their distance from the mainland and the rough sea dividing them from it, they are practically unapproachable for seven months in the year; and when at any time the police do come, warning by signals or otherwise is easily given, and it is not unreasonable to conclude that everything connected with the stills is found to have been carefully hidden away.

A gentleman of whom I made some enquiries respecting the title of "King of Inishkea" gave me the following information. The title is said to have come down from the Middle Ages, and was hereditary in a family of the name of Caine. The Kings used to lead the fleets of curraghs in the days when fishing was a real business, and led or organized attacks on sailing vessels becalmed off the islands. On these occasions the boats would surround the ships, and the islanders get on board in large numbers on pretence of barter, when they would carry off everything they wished for. This continued till well on in this century; and there are some very old men alive now who were at one time transported for these acts of piracy. The Kings used to decide all disputes, and from their decisions there was no appeal. They and their families were treated with much consideration, and received the largest share of the spoils from vessels as well as of drift-wood and sea-weed. The direct male line died out some five-and-twenty years ago in a somewhat tragic manner. The King's only son, a fine young fellow, died before his father, and it is said that the whole family, father, mother, and three daughters, died within two years of grief at the loss of the young man. The present "King" of the north island is a man of the name of John Lavelle, a native of Inishboffin, who came lobster-fishing to Inishkea and married a near relation of the last King, and on whom in consequence has fallen some of the dignity of kingship; while his son, a fine tall young fellow with a red beard, is recognized as the heir-apparent. Lavelle arbitrates in local disputes, but his decisions are not always treated as final, appeals to the law of the United Kingdom not being unknown. He has none of the material advantages of royalty, receiving no extra

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share of wreckage or weed. The man who is sometimes called the King in the south island is not recognized as such by the inhabitants, nor does he exercise the functions of judge, and seems to have received the title of King from strangers, because he happens to be the richest man in the island.

With the waning authority of the Kings has apparently come the increased power of the priests, who had long set themselves against the acts of piracy encouraged, as before mentioned, by some of the predecessors of John Lavelle. It is not many years since the priests succeeded in crushing a superstition which almost amounted to a kind of idolatry. A stone image or Storm God, rudely carved into a human shape, was set up on the south island, but was afterwards for years on the north island, where it was kept in a kind of temple erected for it (the remains of which are still standing), and from this it would be taken out and set facing the quarter from which the natives desired that a storm should come. It was subsequently brought back to the south island, and there it was broken up by a priest some fifteen or twenty years ago. The islanders put the pieces together again and kept them in position by a kind of garment fastened round them; but the priest returned, carried the fragments out to sea, and threw them overboard. In a district where wood is so scarce and difficult to get for building or furniture, and where firewood is of great importance (for there is now no turf on Inishkea), the value of a wreck on the coast is enormous, and wrecking used to be practised whenever possible, with the usual barbarous accompaniments with which we have been made familiar in stories of the Cornish coast; but no instance of it has been known since 1848. Though no illegal means for getting wreckage are now resorted to, the drift-wood is as much valued as ever, and the people all along this part of the coast bemoan the diminution in quantity consequent on the use of iron in shipbuilding and the increase in the number of lighthouses.

Other superstitions still linger in the district, such as its being unlucky to bury a drowned man; that the souls of drowned persons go into seals; and the existence of fairies. It is said that there are five seals in Broadhaven Bay well known to be much more wary and cunning than any others, and these have "the fairies" in them, instead of human souls.

Some line-fishing is still carried on at Inishkea in the curraghs, many of which, besides those that had come out to meet us, we saw

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lying bottom upwards on the beach. These curraghs are a great improvement on the old almost circular ones which I believe still exist on the Boyne, and are somewhat more like ordinary boats than the ones we saw in the Mullet. There they are built with round bottoms without keels, high and narrow at each end, and without rudders. They are made of thin boards about 4 inches wide, running along their whole length, with parallel interspaces about the same width as the boards. The whole is then covered with black canvas. They will hold four men, and are wonderfully light and buoyant; but how they can be steered in a rough sea is a mystery to the uninitiated. These Mullet coracles cost about £4 10*s*. The Inishkea boats differed from them in being more of the shape of elongated punts, square at the stern, and in having no interspaces between the boards, so that one was not afraid of putting one's foot through the bottom as one got in. They are as destitute of keel and rudder as the Mullet boats. We returned to the *Hawk* in these primitive barques, and though it cannot be said that they are comfortable to sit in, huddled up as one is on the bottom of the sloping stern, still in the smooth water of the little bay one was not troubled by anticipations of an imminent wetting.

The sun was setting in glorious colour as we returned that evening to Dugort, the curious peaked "Black rock," further out to sea, looking almost transparent; the little island of Duvillaun, with, as its name indicates, black rocky sides, lying to our left, while Achill Head in front was lit up with pink and orange sunset lights, and furrowed with mysterious-looking blue shadows.

We were equally fortunate in the weather next day, when under a brilliant blue sky Lady Zetland and her party rounded Achill Head on their way to Clare and the other islands. There was just enough haze to give the full effect of height to the peak of Croaghaun, and the splendid line of cliffs projecting into the sea like a great arm bent at the elbow. The water was quite smooth, and the cormorants, guillemots, and razor-bills dotted about on it were so bold as to allow the steamer to come almost upon them before they dived. The view of the north end of Clare Island was, perhaps owing to the haze, almost as fine as that of Achill Head, but on rounding the north-eastern promontory we lost sight of it, and instead of peaks and cliffs, had in front of us only low hillsides cultivated in patches, and the little bay and harbour of Kinnahooey, overlooked on the south side by the remains of the old castle of Grace O'Malley. This is

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not a large building, and as seen from the village, one would not guess it to be as old as the days of Queen Elizabeth. Moreover, whitewash, though cleanly, is not imposing. Round it were crowded numbers of the inhabitants, who, as we neared the shore, ran down to join the crowd on the pier and the crews of our escort of boats, cheering vigorously as we landed. After the experience of Inishkea it was an immense relief to see that the Clare islanders looked by no means very wretched, and I was not struck by any remarkable amount of disease or deformity among them. The houses, too, seemed somewhat better than those of Inishkea, and the soil lighter, drier, and less peaty than what I have usually seen on the West Coast.

We walked a little way across the beach, up to two small whitewashed houses, where we met and were introduced to Father Molloy, who welcomed us very cordially; and presently we entered one of the houses beside which we had been standing, which is the nearest approach to a hotel on the island. It was very neat and clean, the walls hung with prints, and with strings of guillemots' eggs and other little ornaments about the room. The cool shade was very refreshing after the hot sun outside. The state of the tide prevented us from seeing the Relief works at the harbour, but we walked a few hundred yards off along the sand to where a road is being made overlooking the shore. Returning to the village, we were asked to listen to an address from the school-children. It was read out by a little boy named after General Gordon, who was dressed in one of the brown corduroy suits sent in connection with the Irish Distress Fund. He did not seem at all troubled with shyness as he stood facing us in front of his companions and surrounded by the smiling faces of the crowd, and he read very well, although his pauses for breath did not always coincide with the ends of his sentences. Both here and elsewhere much gratitude was expressed to us for the clothes we had been able to send to the children, as well as other forms of relief; and I heard of a man remarking that "had it not been for the famine they would all have been starving."

The address having been read, we went back to our boat, and left the island amid much shaking of hands and renewed cheers. Passing on our left the uninhabited island of Caher, with its rugged and indented cliffs, we next visited Inishturk. This island has a much more rocky surface near the landing-place than either Inishkea or Clare, and the hillside rose more abruptly

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from the shore, but it had no specially fine features. Rowing from the steamer, you come upon the tiny harbour quite suddenly round a point of rock. The water is exquisitely transparent, showing the white sand and seaweed far down in its depths, and one longed to bathe in it, till one noticed certain uninviting remains of dead fish here and there among the seaweed. This was the only place we came to in all our tour amongst the islands where our arrival occasioned no interest whatever. Most of the men were away collecting sea-wrack for manure, but the few that remained hardly came out of their hovels, or if they did so, gave us but a lack-lustre gaze. The little houses were dotted round about the harbour, often built on the bare rock. A grey pony with two panniers was standing in a heap of seaweed at which he kept munching away with persistency, and treating us with as supreme an indifference as did his masters. Mr. Hervey, R.E., who is in charge of the Relief works on these islands, took me to see a hut, inhabited by an old woman, who was, however, unfortunately out, so that we could not see the interior. It was but little bigger than a good-sized English pigstye, and looked as if it could by no possibility have been made to hold an ordinary bedstead in any position whatever.

A new road is being made from here to the other side of the island, where I understood that there is a larger population, and that the houses are better. This road was as yet in the roughest stage of untrodden sharp-pointed metal, from which the flags at the sides formed a welcome relief. To walk along the edge of a road seems to be the natural instinct of the Turk islander, for it was in consequence of the inveterate habit of man and beast to do so, much to the detriment of the road, that the border of flat stones was added.

If the inhabitants of Inishturk took no interest in our party, the same cannot be said of those at Inishboffin. The *Hawk* anchored off a little inlet on the east side of the island, where a crowd was awaiting us. The little boats that came racing out to meet us had oars erected in their sterns decorated with red and white streamers, and cheer upon cheer greeted us as we pulled to the beach, and as our boat was hauled up by fishermen to give us a dry landing. Smiles and welcomes met us on all sides, and the shaking of hands can only be compared to that of a Lancashire crowd on the evening of a parliamentary election. Nearly all the population seemed to have come out to meet us;

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the women with shawls thrown over their heads and shoulders, short, madder-dyed petticoats, and bare feet; the men in rough drab suits, with slouch hats tawny from exposure; the children, bright and rosy-faced, in all sorts of costumes, but often, boys and girls alike, in frocks of the homespun flannel, usually without head-gear and always without shoes. Preceded, surrounded, and followed by these, the children's little feet tripping over the sharp stones as comfortably as if on a soft pile carpet, we walked by a bridle-track across the south-east point of the island to the harbour, where also lies the main village. The road was bounded on each side by cultivated ground, which, as in Clare Island, seemed to me to be of better quality than much on the opposite coast, the different patches being as usual walled in by rough banks or stone fences dotted by an occasional daisy or violet. The island is undulating, but nowhere more than 300 feet high. The harbour is very pretty, and being sheltered at the south and west by a stony promontory and island, is completely land-locked. Vessels as large as the *Hawk* (348 tons) can lie inside it, though it must require careful manœuvring to get them safely out again. On the end of the promontory are some ruins commonly called "Cromwell's Castle;" but I was told that they are really the remains of buildings formerly erected by the Norwegians to protect their fisheries. The Dutch and other nations also obtained fishing rights from the Government at various periods along these coasts, paying large sums for their privileges.

At the head of the harbour we found the principal inhabitants of the island, who had expected us to land there, including the priest, Father McHugh, the proprietor of the island, Mr. Allies, and Mrs. Allies. Mr. Allies has a little yacht lying in the harbour, and having a knowledge of boat-building, does much to instruct the islanders in fishing, and keeping their boats in good repair. Two gentlemen from the Land Commission, who were here in connection with the distribution of seed potatoes, also met us. They had been making arrangements to enable some of the poorer islanders, both here and at Clare, who were unable to purchase seed potatoes for themselves and who were ineligible for regular work on the Relief roads and piers, to be paid in seed potatoes instead of money until they should have earned as many as they required for the year's planting, when they are again struck off the Relief roll. This arrangement was very popular, as it saved them from the anxieties of future debt, and

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did not necessitate ready money—an article scarcer, if possible, in the West of Ireland than elsewhere. There was no obvious sign of want visible among the people here, and, as at Clare, they looked strong and healthy, though not of so fine a physical type as I have seen in some other parts of the West. Father McHugh informed me that the inhabitants of the three islands —Clare, Turk, and Boffin—intermarry greatly with each other, but hardly at all with the mainlanders. Whether the population of the three islands combined (numbering about 1690) is sufficient to prevent too close relationship, or whether it is the comparatively small amount of potheen-drinking, certainly the painful consequences so visible at Inishkea do not seem to have resulted here.

The evening was now coming on, and as the captain was anxious to get to the mouth of the Killeries before dark, we were obliged to hurry away to get on board the *Hawk*, which was waiting for us outside the harbour, feeling that we had had all too short a glimpse of these out-of-the-way islands, which, remote as they seem, are yet but little over 400 miles from London. Being fully exposed to the Atlantic, it is very rare that the sea is calm enough for pleasurable visits to the islands, and we were singularly fortunate in having two such days for our expedition—days which might not occur consecutively more than two or three times in the year. Before we reached Killery Bay the sun was setting behind us, and sank into the sea without a cloud to hide its disc. In front, Muilrea, one of the highest of the Mayo mountains, rose from the water, but its "bald flat" head was hidden by mist, and dark clouds were gathered beyond it. A red flaring bonfire was lighted on one of the little rocky islets, and as we advanced up the narrow winding sea-lough, one after another of these burst into flame, illuminating the hillsides and sending long flickering reflections across the water. The *Hawk* crept up slowly towards Leenane, and as we reached our anchorage, a gun was fired on board, the sound rolling back in splendid echoes from the hills. A tar-barrel was blazing on the pier in front of us, lighting up the faces and garments of the closely-packed crowd with its red glow; and as we approached the landing-place and mounted the steps, cheer after cheer greeted us, repeated again and again from the darkness beyond with "Cead mille failthe."

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ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS,

AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY."

CHAPTER XVII.

JUNE and July went by, and still Swift was in Berkshire. Not far from Wantage a bosky cluster of elm-trees fills up a fold of the downs. Passing along the ancient grassy road called the Ridge Way, you look down on it, and see a church tower and perhaps a red gable or two and a wreath of blue smoke rising above the heavy summer foliage, sole signs of the village of Letcombe Bassett. In this quiet spot, that hears scarcely any sound except the noise of water and the rushing of the great down winds in the tree-tops, here in the house of a silent eccentric parson of small means, he boarded himself out and let the busy world go its way. It was not in any spirit of cheerful philosophy that he thus threw aside the tangled skein of his affairs, public and private, nor did he consciously go to Nature for consolation. But she, although she could not give him cheerfulness, did unasked deliver him from the storms of bitter anger, the thousand agitations, the "fever of the soul" that mined his being in London and in Dublin, and bestow upon him a certain calm, as it were the calm of a lowering autumn day. The long internecine struggle between his friends Bolingbroke and the Lord Treasurer had ended in the overthrow of the latter; and Swift, who had been maddened by his obstinacy and stupidity in the days of his prosperity, stood by him with loyal affection in his disgrace. Now Queen Anne was dead, his own hopes of advancement dead with her, and his friends, as it was rumoured, likely to be accused of high treason. He hardly knew why he lingered; perhaps partly because he shrank from returning to Dublin, partly because he loved, however uselessly, to stand by his friends when they were in trouble. Even had he known how far Bolingbroke and

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Peterborough and Atterbury had gone in those intrigues with St. Germains which had so little of his sympathy, he could not have borne to forsake them. His own political career was over, and with it he thought all that was worth calling his life.

"Few and evil have been my days," he murmured to himself, and bowed his head on his breast, as he came along the Ridge Way, returning from one of those long rides which were at once a diversion to him and a cure for his bodily ailments. Five-and-thirty years of servitude had been his, yet five of comparative obscurity, some three or four of power and fame and strenuous life, when, like a swimmer borne shorewards on the summit of a wave, he had rejoiced in his strength and made sure of reaching his goal; but the wave was spent, and again he was engulfed in the trough of the sea, this time as it seemed never to re-emerge. Nor was his ambition or his disappointment all of a petty and personal kind. Faults he had as a politician and as a man; he was imperious and prejudiced in a generation in which his freedom from many prejudices was more remarkable than his slavery to some. But he had strong sense, a far-seeing mind, and above all a public spirit, a love of justice, an inflexible uprightness almost unique in the petty venal herd which was soon to be priced and bought by Walpole. He was fitted to serve his country, he had overcome as no man before him had overcome the difficulties of poverty and want of powerful connections, and had sat as an equal at the Councils of Ministers, by that equality doing more to affirm the dignity of the Church than any Bishop in the House of Lords. A turn of the wheel, and not only was his every achievement rendered null and void, but the party on whom he fondly imagined the prosperity of England to depend was not so much deprived of power as annihilated. Over these public misfortunes, over the misfortunes and difficulties of his private life, he brooded ceaselessly, sitting with a book before him in the little wainscoted parlour at Letcombe Bassett or roaming through the lanes and fields. It was his folly, his weakness, perhaps his inevitable curse to be unable to refrain his thoughts from wandering again and again in the same well-trodden weary unprofitable ways. The oftener they returned thither, the greater, the more intolerable appeared the wrongs he had suffered from Nature, from Fortune, from his fellow-men. Nothing but hard galloping on horseback seemed able to shake the brooding demon from his soul, and that but for a little. Happily his friend Mr. Harley had made him a present of a powerful horse that carried his weight easily. Often in the

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gathering dusk or when the wild gusts of rain were driving over the open downs, the lonely shepherd, standing in the doorway of his wheeled hut, would be startled by the quick heavy thud of hoofs coming along the Ridge Way, and see a great iron-grey horse pass by at a gallop, sometimes with every sinew stretched to the utmost, foam flying from the bit and blood on the rider's spur. At other times, when the hour was earlier and the day fairer, the grim-looking rider would draw rein and exchange some simple talk with the shepherd about the weather and his flock; on which subject, in spite of, or perhaps in consequence of his deferentially proffered questions and opinions, the shepherd pronounced him to be a very knowing gentleman, though he could not go so far as to altogether contradict the Letcombe folk, who held the poor gentleman to be weak in his intellects, and for this reason placed by his friends under the care of Parson Gery. Swift was no enthusiast for Nature; a well-planted orchard and a trim willow-walk gave him more definite pleasure than the wide prospect from the Ridge Way, which probably affected him little more than it had done the Roman legionaries that had passed along it before him. Yet he climbed the steep way thither again and again out of love for the light fresh airs that stream across the downs, the feel and the scent of their fine springy turf, and the freedom of the long galloping ground, rolling itself out interminably before him under the immensity of the sky.

One day early in August, the weather being fine but not hot—for there was a light breeze blowing and fleecy clouds drifting across the blue—he started for his ride earlier than usual, and about four o'clock in the afternoon dismounted from his heated horse in the stable yard of the parsonage.

"Rub him down well, boy," he said to the lad who took charge of him. "Look ye now, boy, as long as I am over you, never call a horse dry till you have rubbed yourself into a sweat over him, nor oblige him with the water pail till he is too cool to be anxious for 't. How you may treat your next master's cattle is none of my concern, but be sure you'll never see the colour of my money, beyond what the law obliges, unless you use my beast handsomely. Methinks the oats were lower in the sack this morning than they should have been. Look to that now as you love my money!"

The lad, who heard pretty much this discourse every day and never knew whether to grin or to be sulky at it, to-day resented the innuendo about the oats.

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"Lor' bless your honour, how 'a do talk, and yer honour knowin' no more nor the babe unbarn o' beästs and vittles and thik loike! I tell 'ee this 'ere harse do eat a power o' wuts, that 'a do, and small shame to 'un, poor beäst, says I."

"Well, well, I'll pass it this once; but never think to deceive me, boy, or you'll find it's yourself that's mightily deceived. I shall find you out; faith, I shall."

And somewhat stimulated and cheered by his ride and his little encounter with the stable-boy, he walked into the house and opened the door of the small wainscoted parlour which was dedicated to his own use. It had a low casement window, on which the oblique rays of the afternoon sun were just beginning to strike, making a certain dimness and dazzle in the room. Through this he distinguished, to his amazement, the figure of a lady in very deep mourning, seated with her back to the light. He paused a moment on the threshold, inwardly cursing the stupidity of the maid-servant, who must have shown some visitor of his host's into his sanctum. But the idea had scarcely time to occur to him before the lady sprang to her feet and threw back her veil.

"Hess!" he cried in incredulity mingled with something like horror. "Good God! Can it be you?"

The trembling anxiety with which she had watched him enter the house grew to trembling fear.

"Don't be angry with me," she pleaded, "I could not help it. 'Twas too tantalising to pass through Wantage and not see you. Didn't you want to see me, Cadenus?"

"Yes—No, I mean. Why could you not send for me if you must be coming to Wantage?"

"I had no time, dear sir," she answered.

"Why the devil should you come by Wantage?" he continued. "Whither are you posting that you come this road rather than by Oxford?"

"To Witney, sir; and besides, sir," she went on, still anxiously excusing herself, "I had a desire to thank you for your kindness in the matter of the money. I dare assure you your signing the bond shall be but a form, yet it helped me mightily with Barber, who without it would I believe have looked very shyly on the loan."

"O, I hate to be thanked, miss, more especially for nothing! Pray, where is your discretion? You used to boast that you had abundance. You showed none in coming hither to set Mrs. Gery tattling."

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The passionate annoyance that betrayed itself in his tone, and in the working of his heavy eyebrows, seemed far greater than the occasion warranted. If he had said his whole mind he would have cried: "I want to forget you; I was succeeding in a measure, and here you come to undo my work. I do not know if I love you, but I do know that I hate the tangle you have made in my life."

If she had known the truth, Esther might not have felt so much surprise and indignation at her reception as now overcame her fear, causing her to flash one look upon him, and then, throwing her heavy veil once more over her face, walk out of the room and the house without a single word, or so much as seeing Mrs. Gery on the stairs in her best gown and cap. Mrs. Gery, who having but few incidents in her life was obliged to make the most of those that came in her way, had already held a little consultation with the servant on the subject of this mysterious lady, evidently young and fine in spite of her veil and her mourning, who had come to see the Dean and had excused herself from taking a dish of tea in the best parlour. Her rapid disappearance was disappointing, but increased the mystery of her appearance, and Mrs. Gery so plied the Dean with her questions and officious offers of entertainment, that it was some minutes before he could sneak out of the house and down the road after Esther. He followed her at a little distance, not wishing her to return to the parsonage. As she went down the steep hollow lane overarched by trees, she thought she heard the well-known footstep behind her, but would not turn. When she came to the bridge over the long pool formed by the millstreams, she paused a moment and leaned on the parapet, as though to look at a water-lily that was still in bloom, floating over its own reflection in the dark still water, and then she caught a glimpse of Swift following her; but still she continued to walk on up the Letcombe Regis road. Swift came up with her and laid his hand on her shoulder.

"I ask your pardon, Governor Huff. I meant not to be unkind. I was vexed more for your sake than my own."

"I care not for your reasons," returned she, without looking at him. "Who'd think of 'em in the moment of a *joyful* surprise? No—I was used to have a friend, but now it seems I have only a benefactor."

"Governor Huff will always be chiding because Cadenus is a sober old Doctor that can't forget his reasons. Yet sure that

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makes him the better friend for a young woman that is sometimes—O, only sometimes, I allow!—no wiser than others of her sex and age."

"A feeling friend would out of mere compassion have given me a kinder welcome, seeing the many uneasinesses I have to suffer. You do not know all, yet enough to have affected you with pity, had you been capable of it: my poor mamma dying while Moll was yet between life and death, a confusion in our affairs such as 'twould take a better lawyer than I to unravel, such a wretch of a brother as you cannot imagine, and the fear every day to fall alone, two unprotected young women, into the hands of the bailiffs. 'Twas for this reason we fled from London on Sunday, though Moll is most unfit to travel, and mean to lodge with a cousin at Witney till we get some money from my Irish estate. I cannot tell how far I am liable for these debts. Oh Cadenus, you are indeed heartless to add your displeasure, your most undeserved displeasure, to all my other afflictions!"

"Poor Bratikin!" he said. "How canst thou say I did not pity thee, when I did from my soul, and helped thee so far as in me lay?"

"Yes, I was mad and most ungrateful to say so," she returned, sighing and throwing back her veil once more, as she pressed her hand to her forehead. "Well, 'tis a wonder I am not in Bedlam by this. You do pity me, that's certain; but 'tis not just that I want of you. I want you to feel with me, Cadenus, you that know better than any man alive how to feel with your friends in their misfortunes. But I am very exacting to expect it, when indeed you do not know half mine, for I was afraid to commit them to the post, for fear all your letters should be read."

"I am truly grieved for 'em before knowing 'em, little Hess. Could you not go to Lewis for counsel?"

"No, sir, not very conveniently. He had some disagreement with my dear mamma, which I do not well understand, but she was mightily huffed with him, for her, who was, as you must be sensible, the best-natured creature that ever breathed. He knew so much of our affairs too, that I feared he might require to know more, and 'tis the worst of our troubles that some of 'em might be termed disgraces."

Swift's eager sympathies, his friendship and regret for poor "neighbour Van," and the true affection for Esther herself that underlay those other conflicting feelings of his towards her; all combined to break down the barrier between them which he had

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mentally erected. There was not a soul to be met on the pleasant country road, which ran on accompanied for a time by a babbling stream and broadened by irregular stretches of turf dotted here and there with forest trees. As they walked on, Esther told him bit by bit, with many comments from both sides, the family history of the last two months. He had forbidden any of his friends to send him a newspaper, but he had heard of the mysterious death of Lord Peterborough's son, as to whom it was currently reported that he had been killed in a duel under circumstances in some way discreditable to him. This accounted for the fact that though Lord Peterborough could not prevent an inquest being held upon him, and a verdict of murder being returned against his adversary, he had yet taken no steps to procure evidence or to pursue the murderer, who had somehow immediately disappeared; for which neglect his Lordship was much blamed in certain quarters. This was all that had reached Swift of what had been for a week the talk of the town, and Esther was thankful to find it was so, for it showed there were some persons at least who could mention Mordaunt without mentioning Mrs. Mary Vanhomrigh. She had fancied, as people do fancy who either gossip or are gossiped about, that "every one" was talking of the story in which she herself was interested.

So in familiar talk that gradually obliterated the traces of their stormy meeting and of the last two months of separation, they walked on through Letcombe Regis and took the field way to Wantage. In the wide corn-land through which it first passes, the blue-stockinged reapers were cutting the corn, and the women were binding it in sheaves. The afternoon sunshine lay on the plain with its golden wealth of harvest, its clusters and lines of heavy foliaged elms, and its red-roofed homesteads; but fleecy clouds were still piled up on the horizon, and shadows were moving in silent procession along the line of the downs. Swift exchanged greetings with the country folk, who all with bob-curtsey or uplifted hat did that reverence to "the quality" which they considered less a matter of courtesy than a duty enjoined upon them at their baptism.

When they had reached a pleasant meadow, across which a chalk-stream from the downs ran sparkling and clear:

"Let us sit here awhile," said Swift; "I know you love to be romantic, and here's a purling stream, and yonder are willows enough. If I was you, when I had rested a bit, I would choose a handsome tree, take out my pocket-knife, and carve in the

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bark of it an 'F.' and an 'E.,' twined round with a hempen rope tied in a true lovers' knot."

Esther, awaking from a reverie, stared at him.

"What's this you're talking of?" she asked.

"Why, Silly, if you're not in love with this cousin of yours this slashing swain, this Mordantino, 'tis mighty ungrateful of you."

"I am above answering your banter," returned Esther, tossing her chin and blushing deeply.

"I hope he is really indifferent to you, Hesskin," he continued, "for 'tis very unlikely you'll ever set eyes on him again. Yet 'tis certain he behaved very handsomely—though, when I come to think of it, 'twas for his own skin he was fighting, not yours, and he would without doubt have been forced to take his beating had you not intervened. Well, well! These are the scurvy tricks that noble lords love to play us commonality, and I wonder not if, on thinking the matter over, your Mordantino repented him of his generosity and could not forbear letting out the villain's life."

"For shame, Cadenus!" cried Esther. "You never loved poor Frank, but this passes everything. He is incapable of such a deed; and besides he strongly denied it, and I would stake my life upon his word."

"Peace, peace be with us, Missessy. I ask you a thousand pardons. I said it of purpose to provoke you—and must confess that when I hear how hotly you defend your spark, I am no longer surprised that Molly was of the opinion you was in love with him. Faith, she may be more right than either of us, for she's a wise girl in other folk's concerns, is poor Moll. They say, you know, that little misses can't read their own hearts."

There fell an ominous silence; Esther was pulling up blades of grass by the root and tearing them to shreds.

"Cruel! Hateful!" she cried, in a low voice. "O that I had never read mine, or let you read it! Yet, I must have died else. Died! If any one else could see into my heart, they'd wonder that I live, for you alone make my life insupportable, without considering the thousand other uneasinesses I must suffer. Why should I sit struggling with misfortunes, when not all the wealth of the Indies can promise me satisfaction? Why do I live? I know not, indeed I know not. Sometimes I am resolved to die."

"Hush, hush, Essie!" said Swift, not without agitation. "These are very wild words, and I could better excuse them in Moll, whose misfortunes have been much greater than yours."

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"Poor Molly!" returned Esther, gloomily. "'Tis partly for her sake I continue to live. Yet I am not so good a Christian as to find satisfaction in living only for another. I know not how long I shall be able to endure it. Her misfortunes are part of my own; but I deny them to be greater than my private griefs."

"'Tis human nature to do that, Essie. There are few things we are so unwilling to admit about others as that their luck has been worse than our own. Yet you cannot pretend to have lost at one blow the better half both of your fortune and your reputation, to say nothing of a lover who has come to a miserable end, though not more miserable than he deserved. You have your health. These troubles consequent upon poor Madam Van's death will pass over with a little management, and you will find yourself the mistress of a good fortune. Believe me, however the romantic may talk, health and wealth form two large parts of happiness, and sincere friendship the rest. As for these other fancies you will still be maundering about, no reasonable being can for an instant regard them."

"I am sick of your Reason and your Reasonable Beings," said she. "Pray, what does it all mean? Were I confined by some spell to this meadow and forbidden to get food from elsewhere, I should protest I starved, and doubtless the sheep would find me mighty ridiculous. Yes, yonder grave old ram would be positive I could not starve among all this good rich grass. You judge me after his manner, Cadenus, when you declare I have everything to make me happy."

"Happy?" repeated Swift, with a sombre look. "Who is happy? Happiness is a word the devil learned in Paradise to mock us with, lest we should find content. I do not say you are happy, foolish child, but I say you have much less reason to be unhappy than Moll; and I also say that you have not half her philosophy, who appears to have cured herself at once of her infatuation for her spark, when 'twas clear it could cause her nothing but uneasiness."

"Moll again! You can compare a thing so paltry as her flame for that poor wretch to the inexpressible love I bear—O Heavens! Why was I born with such feelings as sure no other creature in this dull age is cursed with, and all, all to be squandered on a block—a stone! 'Twould have been too much to hope that I should find a being whose heart was as capable of love as my own, yet I need not have chanced on one that knows not the very alphabet of it, and will not and

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cannot learn. O, I see well enough 'tis Hebrew, 'tis Chinese to you—no need to tell me you have never loved, for could you give the least guess at what you make me suffer, you'd be a monster to inflict it."

Swift was seated on a knoll of grass, and his hands, clasped across his raised knees, were twisting and playing with his cane. As Esther spoke the blood ebbed from his face, leaving it ashy pale, and when she ended he did not raise his eyes from the point of the cane, which he kept digging into the ground. At length he spoke, but still without looking up.

"D'ye think I don't know what it means to suffer, Hess?"

"Not as I do, Cadenus."

He dropped his forehead on his clasped hands and began a laugh, which broke and turned to a long low moaning exclamation. Esther hearing it was seized with terror and remorse. She took him by the arm.

"Oh, sir, pray don't! Cadenus—dearest, I beg and pray your forgiveness a thousand million times. O Heavens, that I should cause you the least uneasiness! Wretch that I am, unworthy of your friendship, how indeed should you love me? 'Tis madness to dream it. Forgive me this once, and I'll try to be content, indeed I'll try not to complain.—Cadenus!"

Swift raised himself from his bowed posture.

"Let us be calm," he said; "both of us if we can. I forgive you, unhappy child, and hope you'll forgive me as freely. Very likely you think you have more to forgive, yet if you knew all, you'd see 'tis not so. We are both the victims of Fate, and 'tis of no avail to struggle. But there's one particular, Hess, of which, seeing your esteem and friendship for me, I warn you, and 'tis this. My constitution—'tis a secret, remember—is unsound. One of these days your upbraidings, if you continue them, will undoubtedly drive me out of——I mean, bring me to my end."

He spoke so solemnly that the warning could not be regarded as a mere attempt to frighten his friend into self-restraint. Esther shuddered and looked at him with wide eyes.

"Is it possible, sir, you have any malady that endangers your life? This is horrible."

"Horrible!" cried Swift, with energy. "'Tis hellish!" and he gripped her shoulder. "Look, Missessy, can you keep a secret? Yes, though a woman, I believe you can. You have told me your secret, I'll pay you in your own money and tell you mine—one I never whispered before to any living creature."

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He hesitated; then pointing to a great isolated elm, the topmost branches of which stood out lightning-seared and naked above its lower greenery, said:

"Look at that tree. 'Tis what I shall be, what I'm fast becoming—dead at the top. Think, Hess,—alive, but dead at the top." And he touched his forehead significantly. "There's some woman in a play—trust you to know all about it—raves like the very devil because she must be shut up in a vault with the bones of her ancestors. What's that to knowing yourself condemned to drag your own bones, your own hideous rotten contemptible corpse about the world, to be a mock, a scorn, a horror, alike to your friends and to your enemies? And that's the fate I see before me, have seen before me for years, but always getting nearer, till I seem to touch it, to feel it—Hush! Don't let's talk of that any more, it's too frightful and shocking to speak of—and yet 'twill be."

Esther locked her hands tightly together, but otherwise she was calm.

"Dear Cadenus," she said earnestly, "I am very glad you told me of it. 'Tis most horrible, a nightmare fancy; but there's no truth in it. Such false terrors will appear to us in the solitude of our own thoughts, as horrid shapes appear to children in the dark—but there's no substance in 'em. That you of all men living should fear to lose your powers of mind is indeed singular. My opinion of the matter is scarce worth your taking, but I beg of you to confide in Mr. Pope, or Dr. Arbuthnot, or some other whose judgment you value. I am confident they would tell you that for the greatest genius, the brightest wit that has adorned this age, to torment himself with the fear that his intellects are failing him, is the most preposterous fancy that ever was engendered by the spleen."

"Ay, Hesskin, ay, that they would," he answered nodding his head gloomily; "so well have I kept my counsel. But look you, Missessy," and again he gripped her shoulder and positively shook her, "now I've told you my secret, I'll not have you treat it as the megrims of a sick girl, d'ye hear? Do you believe me such a fool as to plague and martyr myself, to refrain from pretty near everything that's sweet in life, and for years and years, the best part of a lifetime, to continue like that, and all for the sake of a fancy? By Heavens, then, you shall hear the whole truth, you shall see to the bottom of the matter, since your cursed female curiosity drives you to it! Yes, I

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fear I shall end a madman.—Why?—Why? Because I am a madman already."

His hand dropped from Esther's shoulder on to the grass. The throbbing of her pulses visibly stirred the heavy crape kerchief that covered her throat and bosom; she did not look at him at once, but bit her under-lip and knit her brow as she stared at the grass, and Swift, who usually sharply rebuked this and any other facial trick, took no notice of it. Then regarding him steadily and severely:

"I suppose, sir," she said, "you'll be angry if I tell you you certainly talk like one. Compose yourself, I beg, and tell me what just cause you have for thinking yourself—you that's reason personified—to have lost your reason."

Swift's gaze fell before hers; the set muscles of his frowning face relaxed, he seemed to calm himself by a mighty effort, and when he spoke again it was in his usual tone.

"'Except I thrust my hand into the wounds'—Eh? O Didymus, Didymus!—I will then describe to you the cause and effect of my malady, as exactly as though you were a physician much wiser than any that ever yet was calved. For look you—but don't tell it to my good Arbuthnot, Hess—with their Galen and their Pharmacopœia, and their palatial wigs, these poor fellows smother up the little light of reason that Nature gave 'em. A bumpkin squire that asks the pedigree of a horse or hound before he buys it hath a better empiric judgment of things than they. I've fooled the doctor and myself so long with that tale of the surfeit of fruit I ate when I was young, and how since then I have been subject to this vomiting and giddiness in the head, that I hardly know what is the truth of the matter. But this I know,—my father's brother in Dublin, he that used me so ill when I was a lad, was subject to this same affection, and he was drivelling, raving mad for years before he died. Ay, ay, haven't I seen the crazy old villain scrambling about his fine house and beating the furniture for rage? And I used to laugh at the poor old wretch, Hess. Besides, my mother's family was said to have this curse on it: that one in every generation must drop down dead or lose his senses. Well, well! This kind of estate will not keep itself in the male line. My mother's brother killed in a fit of madness a wife he valued more than most men value theirs. Consider, Hess—to pass through a hell like that, and when you'd struggled back into the world, and lay there all faint and torn by the devils that had left you, and when you

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missed the woman that should have been watching at your bedside—think of it, Hess."

"Most sad and terrible, sir, yet not your case. And to consider the matter so nearly and your own chances of being in such a case is to invite the madness which you fear, and of which up to this present you show not the least threatening sign, but very much the contrary."

"Ah, Hess, there's where you err." And he lowered his voice. "You know I never see any creature but Patrick when my head's bad. This is why I keep Patrick, though he's the greatest slut that wears breeches. He's very stupid and very good-natured, and he'll not observe or resent anything I may do; and moreover, should he talk on't, he's so notorious a liar that even his fellow-footmen won't trouble to report what he tells 'em. But the truth is I am always strangely dull and cross after these bouts with my head, and sometimes, Missessy, sometimes—well, the words won't come. I know well enough what I want, but I can't find 'em, or I find 'em wrong. And if any one asks me the least question, as, Where is my watch? or, What is the name of my doctor? 'tis not merely that I cannot answer him, but I could kill him for anger at being asked. Yes, the least trifling word or touch may prove sufficient to transport me with rage, and though I thank the Almighty I have never yet lost control over my words or actions, He only knows when and what the end of the matter may be."

"Dear sir," she said, rather tremulously, and placing her hand on his, which lay on the grass, "He certainly sent you a mercy in disguise when he removed you from public affairs."

"No, Hess!" cried Swift with animation. "There's nothing invigorates the mind like affairs of state. My cursed luck has lain in this, that I have had to act with men that had neither common-sense nor resolution. And yet you are right, for who can deal with public affairs except through public men? And are not these altogether vanity?" He sighed dejectedly and said after a pause: "You'll despise me now, Missessy, you'll sneer when I talk of reason."

Esther half rose, and it happened that in doing so she kneeled.

"I? I, Cadenus?" she asked with clasped hands: "Dear honoured—" and she raised to him the dewy brightness of her eyes and the smile of her mouth, pathetic, triumphant.

Swift looked at her kneeling so before him with a deep melancholy, through which an underlying tenderness was more

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perceptible than he guessed. His character was essentially secretive, and everything in his life had tended to strengthen its natural bent. Doubtless there would be subsequent moments when he would bitterly regret having entrusted his secret to any one, but just at this moment he felt only a sense of absolute rest, of relief from a long strain. Humiliation there was none in having confessed his weakness to one whose devotion to him was inalterable, but on the contrary some indirect gratification to his self-esteem; for it is only the dull who think it more flattering to be loved for what they are fancied to be than for what they really are. The charm, the fascination of that great love which had so strangely invaded his life, came over him more strongly than ever before, and more definitely than ever before, he paused to listen to the voice of the enchantress Might-have-been, whose habitation is not far from that of Giant Despair.

"Essie," he said, "do not think me insensible to your—your great affection. O what a brute beast should I be, were it so! There are moments when I would give much to be young again, and able to forget reason and duty. They are hard masters, Hesskin, that give us nothing for our service but the need to serve 'em. Had I met such a one as you twenty years since—well, I might have been madder and more miserable and happier too, and pleaded my youth as an excuse for the wretchedness I had caused to myself and others. But now—though I should curse the hour that ever I laid on my neck the yoke of this Reason and this Duty,—which yet I am bold to say are of a nobler sort than your common church-mouse wots of—now I could not be free of it, I could not endure to kick against the pricks."

Esther, who was seated lower on the bank than himself, was now resting her elbows on the grass and leaning her head on her clasped hands in such a way that he could not see her face; only a black veil and an aureole of hair, golden in the sun.

"Cadenus," she said in a low submissive voice, "tell me—I only wish to understand. Why did reason and duty forbid you to marry, which is, I suppose, what you mean?"

"There, Hess," he returned somewhat sharply, "there you are—the voice of the world, that thinks there's no case of conscience outside the Articles and the Ten Commandments. I tell you I was poor, sick, ambitious, ill-tempered and *mad;* and I am now a little less poor, much less ambitious, but sick, ill-tempered, and a great deal more mad, besides being old. Had I married I

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should now be in Bedlam, and my wife a beggar as my own mother was, and my children a pack of miserable beggars such as I was, and with the same curse on them. I know not whether the folly or the crime of it would have been greater."

"But, sir," she resumed more pleadingly, "'twould sure be much better for you to have a woman to tend you, when you were sick, than a rough footman, whom you yourself say is dull."

"A woman, Hess? What woman? A wife, d'ye mean, to pry and gaze upon me, and go whisper of the poor Doctor and his fits with the dear goodies her neighbours? You think she wouldn't? I tell you this, Missessy, I know no woman of sense or spirit who'd bear to be used as I use Patrick at times without resentment; 'twould not be in human nature that she should. She'd grow to detest and to despise her husband, and she'd always be watching him to see if the fit was coming on. I promise you, when we had a difference of opinion, she'd remember my wits were not always as clear as they should be. Why, the very thought of it would be enough to drive me stark staring mad."

There was silence, and then he resumed in a very gentle voice, that markedly contrasted with the sharpness of his preceding tone.

"I confess, Essie, that you dealt with me, you tamed me better than I could have thought possible, the only time you ever saw me in my sickness. Yet 'twas but a touch of it, a threatening, that day—you know when I mean, don't you?—in Bury Street, on your cousin's wedding-day. I'm glad 'twas no worse. I could not have borne you to see me worse. You'd hate and despise me if you did. Yet, little Hesskin, I have often thought of it since when I've had a bad fit, and been fool enough to fancy you'd have tended me when I was roaring with pain more cleverly than Patrick, and set me down too when I got angry—just made me remember myself, and keep quiet. I never thought a woman could have set me down when I needed it as you do, Essie, and I not resent it."

The cup of Esther's emotion was already brimming, and at this acknowledgment it overflowed. In another moment she was fallen across his feet, clinging to them, crushing her soft arms and bosom and fine crape against them, not indeed shedding tears, but sobbing passionately between her almost inaudible words.

"Then why mayn't I serve you? I only want to serve you. You say I do it better than Patrick, and yet you won't let me.

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Why? I see no reason. It would be kinder to let me come, and if you killed me—if you should kill some one, it had better be me, for I should not care—it would not hurt me half so much as your killing, killing words and your sending me away. How can you dream that anything on earth could alter you to me—make you one whit less loved, less honoured? You've cut me to the soul in telling me of your affliction, and you ought to let me share it. I have a right to share it."

Swift drew her gently up till she was kneeling again, but this time nearer to him, and as he laid his hand on her two clasped hands, her eyes were but little below his own. It was a long, a deeply agitated and melancholy look, that he allowed himself into those pleading eyes. It was all that and more. Esther's violent sobs had ceased, though her lips still trembled.

"Impossible," he said at length.

There was one obstacle to the accomplishment of Esther's desires which he did not mention, and which might not have seemed to every one, as it did to him, the most insuperable.

Those other obstacles between him and marriage he had always before found enough, yet now it is possible that they might have been swept away by the onrush of a stronger tide than any they had yet had to resist, had it not been for this hidden barrier.

That was firmly fixed in his mind, and moreover could he have brought himself to discover it to Essie, she also would have recognized its inflexible nature. The tender blameless ties which had bound him for so many years to Esther Johnson, did not imply marriage with her, but they forbade marriage with another. He was too upright to plead before the tribunal of his conscience the absence of any agreement between them, yet he could not bring himself to allow her claims to another, to acknowledge in so many words that he was not a free man. It was only since his relations to Esther Vanhomrigh had become disquieting that he had put these claims before himself, and it was against his nature, his feeling at the moment and all the traditions of his life to explain them to Essie. He pretended to himself that the secret was Esther Johnson's more than his own, and therefore he could not honourably divulge it to any one, least of all to another woman, who would no doubt take a conventional view of the matter and refuse to regard him as bound by ties so singular and so informal. Probably she would make imputations on Mrs. Johnson's character, if she knew

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that P d f r. shared his income with P p t.; and without telling that, the whole of his obligations in the matter would not be clear. It was not now that these thoughts came into his mind in any sequence; he had had but too much occasion for them before, and the sum of them was already there, both for good and for evil.

"Impossible," he said; loyal with all the strength of his will and his judgment to Esther Johnson, and a long past that was his own and hers, even while his arm was round that other Esther, who had grown too dear to him, and whose face was lifted to his so childlike, soft, and fair, so beautifully transparent in the light of a passion that was as innocent as it was measureless. The colour which had returned to Esther's cheek beneath that long look ebbed again. She withdrew her hands and sat down a little way off him.

"If you do not love me," she said, "why do you tell me your secrets?"

"Good God, Essie!" cried Swift, and took his hat off his head and dashed it on to the ground; "what in Heaven's name can I say to you?"

Then he edged up nearer to her, and laying his hand once more on her two clasped ones:

"Hess," he said solemnly, "you are dearer to me than any living creature; you are of all women her whom I most esteem and adore. For God's sake be content with this, and cease to torture one that loves you but too sincerely. My resolution is taken, and has been taken for as many years as you have been in this most unhappy world. Either we part for ever here and now, or you pledge me your word—I know 'tis sacred—that you will, without further questioning of my reasons, accept my inalterable determination. If in poetry Cadenus has spoken less plainly, has appeared to vacillate in this matter, why, Vanessa knows better than any one that poets play strange tricks with the truth, even when they pretend to tell it. The Dean says plainly to his dear, dearest friend, that her lover he has not been, nor will be; her husband he cannot, nor ever can be; her friend he has been, is, and will be to the end of his miserable days. Do you promise, Missessy?"

Esther was silent a little; then in a low deliberate voice:

"I cannot promise to be content," she answered.

Swift rose to his feet. He dared not look down at Esther; he looked through the tall hedge-row elms away to the downs.

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"Then farewell, child, farewell!" he said hastily; "and God bless you!" Esther seized his coat.

"Stop!" she cried, she too springing to her feet, "I did not mean that. Wait till I tell you what I mean. I wish to say that I do not see how any mortal can promise what they will feel or think. Alas! Who would invite their own thoughts and feelings could they foresee them?"

"Who, indeed!" groaned Swift.

"And I cannot promise not to reproach you, should you behave ill to me, for I could not avoid doing so."

Swift smiled a grim, melancholy smile.

"No, Governor Huff, on my conscience I do not believe you could. You speak the truth as usual, Missessy, and having been so honest as to tell me what you cannot promise, pray now tell me if there is anything you can?"

Esther paused, and then spoke with her eyes on the ground.

"I promise to restrain my feelings as much as lies in my power, and I also promise never again to—to—" she hesitated, then looking him in the face, she continued in a clear steady voice, "never to attempt by word or deed to make you alter your determination."

"Well said! Well said, child!" he cried. "I applaud your resolution. Believe me, by restraining an inclination we get completely the better of it in time." And smiling somewhat ironically: "I once loved figs, you know, and now can see 'em without the least desire to taste 'em."

"Have you promised me anything in return?" asked Esther gravely, without noticing this philosophical reflection, which its author had perhaps addressed more to himself than to her.

"Yes," he returned as gravely; "give me your hand." She did so. "I promise you, Essie," he said, "a most tender and devoted and constant friendship, from this day to the day of my death, which I pray the Almighty may not be a very great way off. Amen."

He held her hand a moment longer. Then:

"Let us go on," he said. "Moll will be expecting us."

The silence which followed as they walked side by side in the direction of Wantage was instinct with calm happiness to Esther. Whatever she might feel in the future about the compact into which they had entered and the manner in which Swift fulfilled his part of it, just now it seemed very sweet and sacred. For Swift that silence was full of inward debate.

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"I have surely sacrificed this poor child and my own inclinations sufficiently," he protested to himself. "A man is not bound to be the friend of one woman only, as he is bound to be the husband of one wife only." And yet a voice went on repeating with a monotonous cuckoo-cry: "P d f r. does not love P p t. Poor P p t!" And all love and all affection, and the very bond into which he had just entered, seemed to him dust and ashes, mocked as they were by this *memento mori*, this ghost of sweet things dead.

They walked thus in silence for awhile, and then Swift began once more to discuss the tangled business affairs of the Vanhomrigh family. Ginckel was still in Paris, alleging fifty reasons why his successful courtship of the rich widow could not be brought to a crisis. Meantime he was indignant at his appropriation of Molly's money being called anything but a loan to which he had a right.

"Why do you not apply to Cousin Purvis?" asked Swift.

"The poor lady has had a stroke of the palsy, and has lost her senses for the present," replied Esther. "Besides, our poor mamma applied to her so often that I believe I should have been ashamed to."

"And Ford? How did Ford behave?" asked he. Esther shrugged her shoulders.

"O, like other people—shabbily."

"I am sorry to hear it," returned he. "Before I left town I thought him sincerely attached to Mollkin."

"He left a formal condolence at the door. 'Tis all we have heard of him these two months."

"Shabby, very shabby," repeated Swift. "Yet I think myself exceedingly foolish in continuing to be surprised at the baseness of mankind."

"To do him justice, I do not think 'twas the ill report of our money matters kept him away. But I wish there were some sumptuary law, whereby the common mob of sentiments should be forbid to wear names that are too fine for 'em. No matter. We have had the pleasure of proving that we possess two or three friends; and those that never knew misfortune or calumny cannot swear to so many."

"Very justly said, miss! Ah! 'Tis an ill world."

Esther smiled.

"I thought it so, sir, some hours back, but find it now wonderfully changed for the better."

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When they had arrived at the Bear Inn, had passed up the stairs, and stood at the Miss Vanhomrighs' parlour door, Esther paused.

"Pray do not remark on Molly's sick looks," she said anxiously.

"Hath she never a jest left in her composition?" asked Swift.

"Some folks can jest on the rack," returned Esther. "But I doubt their jests are but a more courageous kind of groan, and they give me no pleasure to hear."

When they opened the door, the first thing they saw was a crooked little gentleman, huddled up in the corner of a large chair. He rose as they entered, and advancing upon the Dean with open arms, embraced him as heartily as their respective heights allowed.

"Pope!" cried Swift, half pleased, half vexed. "You here! I never thought to see you till Friday."

Then he turned to Molly, and with difficulty repressed an expression of pain and surprise, so terribly changed and thin did she look in her heavy mourning.

Mr. Pope, who was staying at Stanton Harcourt, was to spend two days with Swift at Letcombe Bassett, and the chaise was being got ready; so very soon the two gentlemen took their leave. Essie stood at the foot of the stairs, looking out into the inn-yard to see them depart. They had made their adieux, and Mr. Pope was already in the chaise, when Swift came up to her again, hat in hand.

"Good-bye, Hess," he said. "'Tis very uncertain when we shall meet again, but I will write to you when the occasion offers. I go to Ireland shortly. When do you return to London?"

"I do not know," replied Esther hesitatingly. "Seeing how our affairs stand there and in Dublin, 'tis more likely we also shall go to Ireland."

He stood silent; then clapping his hat on his head:

"You should not for the world have come here," he cried. "No, indeed you should not!"

THE END OF PART I.

(*To be continued.*)

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HOW THE POOR LIVE.

THE consolidation of the Sanitary Acts into the Public Health (London) Act, following upon the codification of the Artizan Dwellings and Lodging House Acts into a single statute, marks, it may be hoped, the beginning of a new departure in the administration of the laws regulating the health and homes of the working classes. The London County Council and the district and parochial authorities can, at any rate, no longer pretend that their efforts are hampered by the difficulty of putting a complex machinery in motion, now that we have bidden good-bye to the old jumble of enactments. Nor, with the first two volumes of Mr. Charles Booth's monumental work on "The Labour and Life of the People" before them, can they plead ignorance as an excuse for doing nothing. Central and local authorities are no longer able to quarrel as to the fitness of Torrens's Acts or Cross's Acts in any particular case, and so seek to shift the responsibility of taking action on to each other's shoulders. The law, whatever its defects may prove to be, is at least homogeneous. It is contained within the four corners of a couple of statutes. It is, at the same time, idle to hope that the regeneration of the homes of the working classes will be brought about forthwith. Much still remains to be done. The London County Council has an onerous and thankless task. The Vestries and District Boards have to accept the *locus pœnitentiæ* remaining to them. In the provinces again we shall have to witness a great change in the administration of the law before we can hope for fruits.

London, it cannot be too frequently repeated, stands almost alone in this matter. The Metropolis is an expression which comes glibly to the mouth, but it is often more than doubtful whether it possesses any definite meaning. Everybody, it is somewhat rashly assumed, can "locate" it correctly. But for a

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definition we must go back to the Act which created the Metropolitan Board of Works. If you take a map of London and its environs and connect for yourself the parishes scheduled in the Metropolis Local Management Acts, you will find that they are contained in an irregular dodecagon, of which the points are, Stoke Newington, Stratford, Woolwich, Plumstead, Eltham, Lewisham, Penge, Tooting, Roehampton, Hammersmith, Paddington, and Hampstead. This is, roughly speaking, the County of London. In other words, we have to deal with a tract of "country" in the counties of Middlesex, Essex, Kent, and Surrey, containing an area of 75,462 acres, and inhabited by a population of more than four million souls.

But if we can understand the Metropolitan area geographically, it is all but impossible to grasp its integral actuality. Nor can we instantly appreciate the innumerable influences which ceaselessly act and re-act upon its inhabitants. Waves of migration and emigration mark one unending round of revolution—economic, industrial, social. It is a mighty human ocean where surging tides are ever flowing, ever ebbing. London possesses no sort of homogeneity. As Mr. Charles Booth shows, the conditions are not the same in, perhaps, any two parishes. It would, taking the inquiry still further afield, be futile, and worse than futile, to enforce the same rules in the smiling lanes and thriving villages of the Kent and Surrey suburbs, as in the "slums" and "rookeries" of Mile-End and Clerkenwell. There is little in common between Roehampton and Rotherhithe, Sydenham and Shoreditch. Bermondsey has needs unknown to Bayswater. It is therefore impossible to deal with London merely parochially. If you look at the map you will see that London parishes largely resemble the spokes of a wheel. Almost without exception they run outwards from the Central Ring. In other words, in most of them we have to deal with totally different conditions. Rules and regulations which are perfectly well adapted for central areas are totally inapplicable in the Outer Ring. The attempts to regenerate London have failed because they have been applied to the existing divisions. The new departure which is needed is to parcel out the Metropolis into a series of concentric belts.

Ways and means, sooner or later, come to the front in all projects aiming at the reformation of the health and homes of the poor. Under the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, as under all its predecessors, pounds, shillings, and pence will prove the chief difficulty. Nobody can get up the least

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enthusiasm for the financial methods of the Metropolitan Board of Works. Their administration of Cross's Acts was, in more ways than one, nothing short of a disgrace to the Metropolitan community. And by no means the least of the evils this entailed was the enormous expense to which it put Metropolitan ratepayers.

The most remarkable feature of that body's finance perhaps was that the "Estimated Cost" bore no relation whatever to the actual cost of each scheme, *even after deducting the value of the land unlet.* Two or three examples will be enough by way of warning. The Whitecross Street Scheme, St. Luke's, cost £314,631, although estimated at £98,786, a little less than a quarter; the Whitechapel and Limehouse Scheme cost £151,118, while the estimate was only £54,400, little more than a third; the ill-omened Goulston Street and Flower-and-Dean Street Scheme cost £279,640, estimate £147,773, barely a half; and, again, the High Street, Islington, and Essex Road Schemes cost £135,917, estimate £85,060. These examples could, of course, be easily multiplied, but they throw a useful sidelight upon the liabilities to which the London County Council succeeded, and indicate the dangers of wholesale and sensational action. It must be confessed that all these schemes were carried out in the infancy of Cross's Acts, that many changes have since then been made in the law with the intention of reducing the cost within reasonable limits. But, nevertheless, the London County Council has embarked upon an undertaking in Bethnal Green which will involve an outlay of £300,000, although affecting a population of only 5700. The Board were content first to waste the money of the public, and then to quote figures as an excuse for not putting the Acts in force more effectively. Thus, taking six schemes, we find the estimates amount to £237,340, and the total cost to the 29th of February, 1888, to £47,927. What the actual cost will be it would be rash to conjecture here, but it may be worth the while of the London County Council to ascertain without any great delay. Only £243 had been paid of the £46,300 at which the Cable Street, Limehouse, Scheme (which was agreed to in 1886), was priced; only £304 had then been advanced towards the £55,550, the estimated cost of the area in Shelton Street, Parker Street, Macklin Street, Drury Lane, Kennedy Court, Star Court, Cross Lane and Chapel Yard, St. Giles', also begun in 1886. It is a mere commonplace to remark that the expense of carrying out this legislation must

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always be very serious. London must wait for many of those reforms which are so loudly clamoured for by amateur philanthropists until London is prepared to pay for the luxury. But the London County Council would do well to ascertain clearly what is its "mandate" in this particular before it commits itself to any ruinous outlay. The one thing to be guarded against is a repetition of the costly experiments of the old Board of Works. The regeneration of London will not be accomplished by crude or heroic finance.

The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, is, we need scarcely insist, a consolidating Act. It initiated little fresh legislation, but mainly attempted to reconcile the inconsistencies of the existing law, and to supply patent defects in the existing machinery for carrying that law into effect. It is too avowedly experimental, incorporating, as it does, many suggestions of the Royal Commission, with the object of showing practically how far these can obviate the great evils that have undoubtedly been proved to exist. The failure of the Act of 1885 (and that it did fail there is overwhelming evidence) prevents one from feeling confident that the Act of 1890 will prove wholly successful. It was shown in the First Report of the Commissioners that this question was inseparably connected with the reform of local government. Again and again that Report alluded to the difficulty of dealing with any of these problems, either in towns or in urban or rural districts, so long as the system of local administration remained in its present form; and, with a prescience which seems to have been prophetic, the failure of the remedies proposed was predicted unless and until this was remodelled. Now that the County Council has entered upon its work in real earnest, it is therefore of the first moment that it should appreciate the weak points in the old system of local management, as shown by the working of the laws affecting the health and homes of the poor.

The seven parts into which the Act is divided deal, respectively, with, (1) Unhealthy areas; (2) Unhealthy dwelling houses; (3) Lodging houses; (4) Supplemental matters; (5) Scotland; (6) Ireland; (7) Repeal and temporary provisions. In other words, it incorporated the main provisions of the Artizans' Dwellings Improvement Acts, 1875–1882, better known as Cross's Acts; the Artizans' Dwellings Acts, 1868–1882, better known as Torrens's Acts; and the Labouring Classes' Lodging Houses Acts, 1851–1867, with which is associated the name of Lord

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Shaftesbury. The Act repealed all these statutes as well as the Act of 1885 *in toto*, re-enacting by incorporation, with sundry amendments and additions, their more important provisions.

It may be confidently stated that, as regards the clearance of large and small insanitary areas and the demolition of unwholesome dwellings, little has been done during the last five years. In many of the slums of London the owners of dilapidated property have been stirred up to repair, and even rebuild, in view of the confiscatory powers of the Acts. Cleanliness, too, on the part of the occupiers is much more general, although the fact might not strike everybody in the same light; and the elements of sanitary science are, perhaps, more widely known, if not very heartily appreciated. But there is not a little danger that much of this improvement will be very evanescent. "Tenement-mongers" have too long successfully traded upon the shortcomings of the law to be restrained otherwise than by a strong hand. The neglect of the local authorities to enforce divers provisions of the Act of 1885 is not likely to be perpetuated by the London County Council under the Act of 1890.

The Metropolitan Board, as every one knows, was the authority for putting into operation Cross's Acts, under which areas could be dealt with where the "houses are not so structurally defective as to be incapable of repair, and so ill-placed with reference to each other as to require, to bring them up to a proper sanitary standard, nothing short of demolition and reconstruction." Torrens's Acts, on the other hand, under which single houses or comparatively small groups of houses could be compulsorily repaired or demolished "when unfit for human habitation," were under the local authority. As the First Report on the Housing of the Poor somewhat roughly put it, "Torrens's Acts do for small areas what Cross's Acts do for large areas." Now the Act of 1885 amended both these groups of statutes on much the same lines, and they have been incorporated in this form in the Act of 1890. An official representation has to be addressed by the Medical Officer of Health to the local authority (that is, for the Metropolis the County Council, and for the City the Commissioners of Sewers) as to any area that is unhealthy in whole or in part. If approved by the County Council, the scheme has to be confirmed upon petition by the Local Government Board by Order, which has to be sanctioned by Parliament. In short, the procedure is practically the same as under the old Acts, so that we cannot hope for any

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great change with regard to the reduction of the initial cost to result from the new statute. It is, of course, necessary to institute safeguards against extravagant reforms by providing for due inquiry, but it may be remarked that these could have been made a little less cumbersome without loss of efficiency. Still if the economies of the Act are disappointing, it at least touches the fringe of the difficulty by dealing on drastic lines with the vexed question of compensation.

In providing that no "unearned increment" that may have accrued in consequence of the premises being used for any illegal purposes, or being so overcrowded as to be injurious to the health of the inmates, shall be taken into account in fixing the amount of compensation, it removes one of the great obstacles to the clearance of insanitary property. This goes much further than the Act of 1879, which merely enabled the arbitrator to deduct the estimated cost of abating any nuisance shown to exist in any premises from the sum payable by way of compensation.

The Act, moreover, initiated a great and promising reform in the law by providing for those cases which fall neither under Cross's Acts nor Torrens's Acts. The necessity for this was urgent. There had long been a standing feud between the Metropolitan Board and the Vestries and District Boards as to the respective scope of their powers. The Board, in reply to a large number of official representations addressed to them, used one of two stereotyped formulas. If a scheme could not be strangled by the verdict, "Too small; should be dealt with locally," it was often effectually scotched by the lucid observation, "The Board is of opinion that the area does not come within the scope of the Act of 1875, but should be dealt with by some other means."

This "borderland of action," as it was termed in the First Report (although it would have been more correctly described as "inaction"), between the central and the local authorities, was pointed out in 1884 as requiring "immediate attention." "Places," ran the Report, "which are notoriously bad, remain so because each authority maintains that the other authority ought to deal with them; the real contention between them being whether the improvement, *the necessity of which is disputed by neither*, ought to be carried out at the expense of the Metropolis, or at the expense of the immediate locality." In the event of the local authority declining or neglecting for the space of three months after notice from the Board above to use Torrens's

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Acts, the Board might themselves, under the Act of 1879, have put their provisions in force and charged the local authority with the expense. But it was shown in 1884 that this power had never been exercised, nor has it since been exercised. The old policy, in short, prevailed to the end. Many areas, which medical officers had made the subject of "representations," were duly declared by the Board to be "too small for a scheme." Now as to size, it may be well, in these days of big things, to remark that there was, prior to 1882, no limit whatever as to the areas in which Cross's Acts might be adopted. In that year the minimum was fixed at ten, rather superfluously, since the Board would not "look at" a scheme involving less than a hundred houses. The least consideration shows that this was a most mischievous rule. Under Cross's Acts it is possible to deal with areas as "structurally defective" which cannot be condemned under Torrens's Acts as "unfit for human habitation." It is easy to understand how imperative it is that much old-house property in the Metropolis should be swept away in the interests of the public health, although the rate of mortality among the inhabitants may not be abnormally high. Yet because of this hitch in many bad cases nothing has been done. No fewer than 198 small insanitary areas were brought under the notice of the Housing Committee of the Council during its first year of working.

Under Part II. of the Act of 1890, however, the local authority, that is, the Vestry or District Board, can prepare a scheme for dealing with any areas which are too small to be dealt with as "unhealthy areas" under Part I. of the Act, subject to the approval of the Local Government Board. The London County Council, again, when an official representation does not relate to more than ten houses, is to direct the case to be referred to the district authority, which is, apparently, under compulsion to deal with it as an "intermediate scheme." Its future action in this direction will be watched with curious interest.

This brings us to the great innovation of the statute, or what may almost be called its principle. For the Act throws upon the local authority the positive duty of setting unhealthy dwellings in order, or seeing them abolished. Part II. of the Act (which includes, as we have said, the Artizans and Labourers' Dwellings Acts, 1868-1879, commonly known as Torrens's Acts), if efficiently worked, should do much to regenerate London. Designed for the gradual improvement of unhealthy dwellings

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by repair, or where this was inadequate or impracticable, by demolition, these Acts have largely failed, owing to their permissive character. The local or district authorities gladly availed themselves of any valid excuse for neglecting to enforce their powers.

Now the local government of London is still, for the purposes of Part II. of the Act, vested in twenty-three vestries, and fifteen district Boards of Works. There is a wide distinction between these bodies. District Boards, for instance, almost invariably, compare favourably with vestries, and so form valuable examples in favour of Mr. Ritchie's projected District Councils. The representatives returned to them from the smaller parishes show, in general, much more public spirit than mere vestrymen. Nor are the vestries equally bad. Some are highly efficient, if not very enlightened bodies, which are well and faithfully served. But although these distinctions have found illustration in the spirit in which their statutory powers under various Acts are carried out, there is room for improvement all round. The ordinary practice was to only proceed under the Acts as a last resource. In many districts the authorities have served notices upon owners and occupiers which are quite irregular. The various Nuisances Removal Acts are, in others, employed for all sorts of purposes. Torrens's Acts have, to say the least, always been exceedingly unpopular. In those cases in which they were used it was almost invariably in order to secure the execution of repairs, and often "ornamental repairs." The objection to enforcing demolition on the ground that it is confiscatory became equally effectual as the old excuse of expense.

Again, the *ratio decidendi* under Torrens's Acts was, as we have explained, that the houses should be "unfit for human habitation." This is, of course, a question within the province of the Medical Officer of Health. But, in practice, the district surveyor possesses, and often exercises, a veto upon the orders of the Medical Officer, the consequence of this conflict of authority often being that little or nothing is done where much ought to be done. These considerations explain the continued existence of the large numbers of unhealthy houses and small insanitary areas which one finds with such facility all London over. It is hardly denied that much of this property is practically incapable of repair. It is, of course, always possible to botch up dilapidations and so make a place "eyeable," and

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thereby still more dangerous to health and to life. Much has been done in this way within the last few years. Houses which are rotten from age, or because, although they are comparatively new, they have been run up by "jerry builders," have again and again been condemned and spared. This is the more to be regretted since there are not the same cogent objections to the demolition of single houses or small groups of houses as to large clearances. The displacement of population is, comparatively, so small, and can be effected so gradually, that the consequent hardship and misery among the dispossessed inhabitants would reach almost an irreducible minimum. There are few more mischievous fallacies than those underlying the notion that the regeneration of the homes of the London poor can only be accomplished by heroic measures. The London County Council has, therefore, no lack of opportunities within the limits of practical reform, and under existing statutory powers. To merely require the district authorities to apply Part II. of the new Act would do an immense amount of good.

Since the statute is compulsory in this respect, there seems little reason to fear that it will fail in its effect. Thus the Medical Officer of Health of every district is by Section 30 compelled to "represent" any dwelling house which appears to him to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation. Any four householders can, too, under Section 31 set the machinery in motion. A Medical Officer, again, is required to make a representation to the local authority in the case of obstructive buildings as stopping ventilation, or otherwise making other buildings unfit for habitation or injurious to health, while any four householders can make a direct representation on similar grounds. In default of any action on the part of the local authority, the London County Council can make an order and take the necessary proceedings, or do the necessary work and surcharge the local authority with the expense. But that is not all. By Section 32 it is provided that "it shall be the duty of every local authority to cause to be made from time to time inspection of their district, with a view to ascertain whether any dwelling house therein is in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation." Every possible contingency seems to have been provided for to obviate any danger that these provisions will remain a dead-letter. It is incredible that neither the local authority, the health officer, nor even four of

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the inhabitants of a district can be induced to take action if there is the least necessity for any being taken.

Let us now look at Part III. of the Act which incorporates the Labouring Classes' Lodging Houses Act, 1851–1867. The First Report dwelt at considerable length upon the urgent necessity which had been shown to exist for tenement houses, and the Commissioners were much impressed with Lord Shaftesbury's Act, which seemed to provide, ready to hand, the required remedy. That Act, it was proved, had never come into operation at all, owing to constructive defects in its machinery. Nor can this be wondered at. Up to that time, in order to bring it into force in any district, (1) a vestry meeting for the special purpose had to be called on the requisition of ratepayers, and if two-thirds in value of the votes of the vestry on the question decided to adopt the Act, (2) the vestry had to get the approval of the Secretary of State, and (3) to appoint certain ratepayers as commissioners who might borrow money on the mortgage of the rates, with the approval of the vestry and of the Treasury, and apply it to the erection of lodging houses for the working classes. They might, too, from time to time make such alterations and improvements in the dwellings as were necessary. The land on which these were to be built might be obtained either by appropriating to the purpose parish lands, or by purchasing or renting grounds. The Commissioners, always with the sanction of the vestry and the Treasury, might purchase or lease existing lodging houses and undertake their management under byelaws of their own, which, amongst other things, fixed the rent. In urban sanitary districts, on the other hand, only the sanitary authority were empowered to carry the Act into execution, "one-tenth in value" of the persons liable to be rated to a general district or improvement rate having power to postpone the question to the next election of members of the authority. Improvement Commissioners, moreover, could not determine upon the adoption of the Acts without the sanction of the "major part in value" of the persons liable to be rated present in meeting assembled. This much detail seems to be necessary in order to explain the original failure of this enactment, *which had never been put into force.*

Now Lord Shaftesbury declared before the Commissioners that if the Act was put into operation it would meet almost everything that was then required, and that it contained powers which would remedy the greater part of the evils existing. The

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Commissioners, moreover, reported that, "looking at the powers which are conferred on a local authority by the Act where it has been adopted, it seems that Lord Shaftesbury's belief in its efficiency is not merely based on the natural favour with which a legislator regards his own productions." They accordingly recommended that "the Act should be made in London *Metropolitan instead of parochial*," and that, "as long as the government of London remains in its present form, the Metropolitan Board of Works should be the body entrusted with its execution." These recommendations, amongst others, were carried out in the Act of 1885, and re-enacted in 1890.

As the law stands, therefore, Lord Shaftesbury's Acts may be adopted by the London County Council, with, we imagine, the sanction of the Secretary of State. The authority of the Metropolitan Board of Works and, therefore, of the London County Council under the Metropolis Management Act, 1855, was expressly extended for the purposes of the Act of 1851, so that all the expenses of its adoption are to be defrayed out of the Dwelling House Improvement Fund, and the financial difficulty can thus be, temporarily, got over. In short, in the place of the old ridiculous and impossible procedure, a simple and intelligible system has been instituted, while, at the same time, abundant safeguards are retained to prevent the scheme from being improperly used or abused. The London County Council and the Secretary of State are not very likely to apply it except in cases in which it is really required and in suitable districts. It is interesting to know that these powers have been put into force, and that an attempt is being made to give effect to the suggestions of the Commissioners and the provisions of the Legislature by endeavouring to provide in this way deficiencies in the supply of tenement houses. The great "dossing" enterprise of the Council in St. Giles' is, at any rate tentatively, a step forward. It is not likely to be forgotten that there are a large number of vacant sites at the disposal of the Council, and unless the Act of 1890 is to remain, *pro tanto*, a dead-letter, that enterprising body cannot do better than give its sections 53–71 a practical trial. There are those who even urge that this can be done to pay.

The importance of these considerations will be appreciated when it is remembered that the very difficulty which has arisen was anticipated by some of the Commissioners. Mr. Goschen, Mr. Lyulph Stanley, and the late Mr. Samuel Morley, in a joint

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memorandum, appended to the First Report, distinguished between giving the local authority power to build under exceptional circumstances, or under Cross's and Torrens's Acts, on limited areas, and general and unlimited powers for the erection of houses for the poor.

"It is proposed in the Report," this memorandum goes on, "that Lord Shaftesbury's Act should be made Metropolitan instead of parochial. This means that the central municipal authority is to have powers for erecting working-class dwellings in all parts of the Metropolis. Is it to be a *duty* on the part of this authority to put the Act in force, and, if so, in all parts of the town where such additional accommodation is needed, or only in some? And if the cost is to be charged on the whole Metropolis, would not the duty have to be performed everywhere where necessary, a process so difficult, and involving such vast expenditure, that it is not likely to be undertaken at all? We are disposed to think that as the existing Act, with its parochial limitations, has remained a dead-letter since 1887, so, if it were applied to the Metropolis as a whole, it would similarly disappoint expectation."

This is forcible reasoning, and, judging by results, the prediction was prophetic. But the Act of 1885, nevertheless, gave effect to the recommendation that a trial should be given to these powers, and notwithstanding the reservations of individual commissioners, there is no justification for the contemptuous indifference with which its provisions in this direction have been met. There has been, on the one hand, in several Metropolitan districts a dearth of tenement houses of the right type, and, on the other, a machinery specially constructed to meet this particular phase of the difficulty, possibly capable of great results, and that machinery has remained idle and untried. But the importance of a change in this respect has already been recognised. Mr. Ritchie, during debate in the Commons, has dwelt with special emphasis upon the powers possessed by the London County Council under the Acts of 1851 and 1885 to "hire, purchase, erect, furnish, manage, and let houses as lodgings for the working classes," and has strongly urged their being made the most of. This is, therefore, one of the directions in which a new departure was confidently looked for, so that it is idle to object to it as socialistic in principle. The success of the municipal lodging houses at Glasgow seems to justify hopes that similar institutions will succeed in London.

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From all this it will be seen that the Act makes a distinct advance. Much yet remains to be done, but now much more can be done than has hitherto been practicable. Such a work as this, however—it need not be laboured—can only be accomplished by the aid of the most exact local knowledge. Local Reports are useless unless verified by outside evidence such as a roving Commission could secure, and this would possess advantages not enjoyed by the four geographical sub-committees of the Committee of the Council. Most district returns are absolutely misleading. The most unhealthy conditions will, indeed, be found to exist where they are least suspected. It is a startling fact, which inquiry upon the spot distinctly verifies, that at the present time, while much of East London has been improved out of recognition, very gross evils still exist in the heart of the West-end. In Mayfair (close to Grosvenor Square) and St. James's there are at the present moment many working people herded in cellars and kitchens in defiance of all regulations. These dens are commonly let with an upper room, and since not "occupied separately as a dwelling," the law is defeated. Overcrowding in its most acute form results naturally from the conditions under which the West-end poor live, and the mere immunity of fashionable neighbourhoods from the amateur sanitarians who make the work of East-end authorities a burden to them tends to produce a general belief that they are free from the dangers and difficulties which exist east of the City. Yet the truth is, that although the conditions differ, the problem presented for solution is, perhaps, most difficult as regards West London. The working classes, whose work lies in the West-end, are, in most respects, even worse off than their comrades of the East.

Another point which lies at the fringe of the difficulty is the necessity which compels large populations who work in the markets, docks, or centres of supply and employment, to live as near as possible to the scene of their matutinal labours. Each of the Metropolitan markets is a focus of congestion. Covent Garden is, perhaps, the worst of all in this respect. Here are dozens of courts which are densely crowded under conditions as bad as any of those which shock humanitarians in Spitalfields and Bethnal Green. And both the Strand District Board of Works and the vestry of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields have practically acquiesced in this state of things. This evil must exist in greater or lesser degree wherever the population far exceeds the

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accommodation of the area. But can it be pretended that it cannot be palliated? Look at what has been accomplished in St. Giles's and Bedfordbury, and contrast it with the wretchedness and misery which here still remain unheeded. It is nothing short of a national scandal that every means known to the law has not been employed to compel the owners to sweep away these rookeries and put up habitations in which porters and labourers can afford to live. As for the rent paid for the present filthy hovels, it seems incredible that the figures are not exaggerated. But an exhaustive investigation, as we have suggested, by a roving Commission would settle these doubts. Is not the cause of overcrowding in such areas as these properly a matter for national interference? It is essential in the interests of the community that work should go on at the docks and in the markets, and the workers have a right to claim protection from the artificial value which is thus put upon the wretched accommodation of the neighbourhood. The markets, we are told, cannot be changed. Then we must change their surroundings. Each district must, in short, be dealt with in the light of local needs. The problem is not homogeneous, but it is not insoluble.

Miss Octavia Hill has a right to a hearing on a question with which she has herself grappled, perhaps more successfully than any other present-day philanthropist. It is not wholly surprising to know that Miss Hill, in common with many others whose lives are spent in the midst of the people, is by no means enthusiastic in favour of "model dwellings." Nothing is more certain than that life in blocks is absolutely intolerable to the lower strata of humanity, and Miss Hill declares that "often with a very fair show to the outsider, the block becomes a sort of pandemonium." * But this is merely a part of the great difficulty of all, the treatment of the helpless class, which, as Mr. Booth shows, "hangs fatally round the necks of the classes just above it," which is "industrially valueless and socially pernicious." No scheme yet devised has touched even the outskirts of the vicious and the casual poor. It is more than doubtful whether each in succession has not actually degraded their environment.

W. MORRIS COLLES.

* "Labour and Life of the People," vol. ii. p. 265.

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A MAIDEN SPEECH.

CHAPTER I.

"TOM ought to be here by now," said Lady Cecilia, glancing at her watch, and then looking out of the window.

"I dare say he won't be much longer," said Miss Sinclair, in a tranquil tone. "Very likely it isn't all over yet." But she took a stealthy glance at the clock on the mantel-piece, and made a little gesture of impatience.

"He said he would be here by four," Lady Cecilia rejoined, "and it is now nearly half-past. Can anything have gone wrong?"

Miss Sinclair did not reply; but after a little while she said—

"This may turn out to be an eventful day in your brother's history, my dear. In years to come he may look back on the day when he first entered the House of Commons, and think of how he hoped to make a name and have a career. But perhaps your brother doesn't indulge in such visions."

Lady Cecilia looked at her friend quickly.

"Edith, you mustn't think Tom is indifferent because he doesn't say much. He is like most Englishmen, and hates to show his feelings. But I am sure he does feel—he is ambitious, I know. Don't you think so too?"

"I hope so certainly," said Miss Sinclair.

"He may do great things," Lady Cecilia continued; "have a career, as you say. And if he does, you will know that you were the cause of it all. He would never have gone into Parliament if you hadn't wanted him to. He is doing it just to please you."

Miss Sinclair smiled and blushed a little. Lady Cecilia's words were pleasant to listen to; but she felt that she must make some protest.

"I am afraid that is a wrong motive," she said. "He ought to do it for the love of his country, not out of regard for me.

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But I am glad he has entered public life, any way. It is dreadful to me to see a man who could do better, wasting all his time as so many men do. Your brother has talent, you know."

"Oh, yes," said Lady Cecilia hastily; "Tom has talent, though he seems anxious to appear as stupid as he can."

It is possible Miss Sinclair might have protested against this as an exaggeration, had it not been for the arrival of the gentleman under discussion.

The Hon. Thomas Chillingham Walcot Barracliffe, or, as his friends called him, Tom Barracliffe, was a tall, good-looking man, a little under thirty. Both the ladies greeted him warmly.

"Did it go off well?" Miss Sinclair enquired.

"Tell us all about it," Lady Cecilia said.

"There's not much to tell," he replied slowly. "It's a form, you know—a mere form; and it doesn't take five minutes. You go up to the table—two members introduce you, you know. You take the oath, and then you shake hands with the Speaker, you know; and that's all. You have to show up what they call the Return to the Writ."

Edith's mother entered the room, and Tom Barracliffe enquired after her health, and then Lady Cecilia had something to say and drew her over to the window. Tom and Edith had one end of the long drawing-room to themselves. She was the first to speak.

"Now, Mr. Barracliffe, you are really a member, and I shall be quite impatient till I read your first speech. I was so sorry that there was no contest at the election; I would have liked you to give ever so many addresses to the electors and explain all your principles. What an excitement we should have had over the poll!"

Tom Barracliffe smiled a little.

"I believe most men are glad to get in as easily as they can," he said. "I can't say I was anxious to speechify; people ask you such awkward questions, you know."

"But now you are in the House, you must speak, you know; and you must begin soon. You must get over the first awkwardness as soon as you can."

"You don't want me to join in—in the debate on the Address, do you?" he asked.

"No," Miss Sinclair said; "that might be too soon. You must take a week or two to get used to the House; but you might speak once or twice when the Estimates are being

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discussed. Just say a word or two, you know, and reserve your first great speech for some great occasion."

"You want me to make myself ridiculous," Tom said.

"Never mind about seeming ridiculous," she replied. "Remember Disraeli and his failure. How grand it was of him to say, 'The day will come when you will hear me!'"

Mr. Barracliffe looked very dubious. After a long pause he said, with some attempt at lightness, "You lay your commands upon me, then."

"I do. You are to be ambitious, you are to speak and sit on Committee, and address public meetings; and by and by you will get some office, and then you will go into the Cabinet, and perhaps become Prime Minister."

Tom Barracliffe looked round, and then said in a low voice—

"You don't intend to keep me waiting till then, I hope?"

"Till you are Prime Minister—no. I shall be an old woman then, I suppose."

Tom did not smile or look at her. He sat with his head bent forward, gazing intently at a spot in the carpet. After a little while Edith spoke again:

"Seriously, Mr. Barracliffe, I can't tell you any more yet. If it's a sin not to know one's own mind, I am guilty of it. I like you very much, I do indeed; and there is no one I like better or so well. I think you ought to be satisfied with that. And I believe in you too. I believe you can do great things, and I want you to try."

Here a footman appeared with tea and its appurtenances. Lady Cecilia and Mrs. Sinclair came back to the little table where the two young people were sitting. Tom looked up at his sister. "Miss Sinclair decides that I am to be an orator."

"Edith is right," said his sister. "We expect great things of you now—'The applause of listening Senates to command.'"

She recited Gray's verse *ore rotundo.*

Tom Barracliffe looked slightly bored—he never disguised his contempt for poetry. Miss Sinclair looked at him enthusiastically.

"I shall be dreadfully disappointed if you don't make your presence felt in the House," she said.

"Oh," replied Tom, "I must go into training at once, I suppose. What does one do to become an orator, I wonder?"

"Oh," said Miss Sinclair, "you'll want to read up all the great

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questions. If you like, I'll ask Mr. Tracy to give me a list of the best books."

Tom Barracliffe did not look particularly pleased.

"Oh, Tracy," he said; "of course, he knows all about it!"

"Mr. Tracy knows everything that is worth knowing, or almost everything," said Miss Sinclair. "He is like an encyclopædia, and he always opens at the right place."

Tom didn't reply at once, and the conversation drifted away from the omniscient Mr. Tracy. But as Lady Cecilia was taking leave—a private and particular leave—of her friend, she said—

"I never knew before you thought so much of Mr. Tracy, Edith."

Miss Sinclair blushed a little, but she replied firmly, "Mr. Tracy is the cleverest man I know, and the best."

"Poor Tom has got a rival then," said Lady Cecilia, looking straight at her friend.

"Mr. Tracy will always be my friend, I hope," she replied, "whatever happens."

After a short pause she added, "He has never claimed to be more."

Lady Cecilia was somewhat reassured, but as she and her brother were driving home together, she couldn't refrain from asking him what he thought of Mr. Tracy.

Tom laughed.

"Oh, I'm not afraid of him," he said. "He's nobody—writes for Reviews and Dictionaries, and all that sort of thing."

"I suppose he's clever?" said Lady Cecilia carelessly.

"Oh, yes," Tom replied. "He's clever, no doubt. We were at school together."

A good deal was implied in the last sentence. It meant that it was at school that Tom had learned that very clever people generally exist very much for the benefit of those who can turn their cleverness to account.

"I may as well get a list of books from old Tracy," Tom added.

"Why were you so late in coming, Tom?" asked his sister.

"I looked in at the club on the way up. Peppercorn came in a bad second."

"I don't think you ought to have kept us waiting," Lady Cecilia replied. "You knew how excited Edith was."

Tom only smiled in reply. His smile denoted superiority and

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an intimate knowledge of women's ways. He was not going to lose his suit by appearing too eager to win it. Just as the carriage was stopping he said to his sister—

"Don't think that I am going to lose my chance. You may be sure that the late lamented Sinclair didn't spin cotton all those years for nothing; she must be very rich. I've no doubt I should be able to start the best training stable in England. That's the only way to make anything out of racing."

And brother and sister entered the paternal dwelling, the town residence of the Earl of Meadhamstead. Tom was the second son of that well-known nobleman, and his elder brother was married and had children. Tom had a full share of that popularity which frequently consoles younger sons. Almost every one spoke of him as a very good sort of fellow indeed. He danced well and rode well, and both at Monte Carlo and Notting Hill was a great slaughterer of pigeons. He was tall and undeniably good-looking, and Miss Sinclair, as we have seen, thought him remarkably intelligent. He had come to know that young lady by means of his sister, Lady Cecilia, who was very fond of Tom and thought he wanted a little judicious guidance. Tom had been spending too freely for some years, and his father had emphatically refused either to increase his allowance or to pay his debts. Hence Tom had come to regard the holy estate of matrimony with an eye of favour, or at least of resignation. And Miss Edith Sinclair, daughter and heiress of a wealthy cotton-spinner, not long deceased, was certainly one of the great lots in our Babylonian marriage market.

At first his wooing was very successful. Edith seemed to like him, danced with him, and talked with him, and became more friendly than ever with Lady Cecilia. Then he had experienced a check. Talking very seriously to him one day, Edith told him that she didn't admire idleness and idle people, that she thought a man ought to find something better to do in the world than shooting pigeons. There were plenty of occupations—science, art, literature, politics. Why didn't he choose one of these?

Tom was not a little perplexed by this novel doctrine, and consulted his sister.

"Edith means what she says," Lady Cecilia replied. "I know her way of thinking. If you want to please her, you'll have to do something; you'll have no chance if she once thinks you are stupid."

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"I know she admires intellect, and all that sort of thing," Tom said ruefully.

"You had better try politics, Tom," his sister had replied; "it's easier than anything else. And papa can get them to find you a safe seat when the General Election comes on."

Thus it was that Tom had become a legislator, and now he was contemplating, with some repugnance, the idea of having to make a speech. But after a few days' attendance at the House, his fear sensibly diminished. It seemed pretty easy to speak as well as most members did. And what they said looked all right when it was reported in the papers.

The Mr. Tracy who has been mentioned was an old friend of Edith's, if a young lady of twenty-three can be said to have any old friends. He came very often to Mrs. Sinclair's house in Park Lane, talked a good deal to Edith, and lent her books with passages marked in them. These Edith did not always read, but she liked discussing them with Mr. Tracy. Edith was very intelligent, and was always forming plans for what she called her mental improvement. The claims and fascinations of society were invariably too strong for these well-meant intentions; but Edith held fast to her friendship with Mr. Tracy, as a proof (to herself) that she was not altogether frivolous.

CHAPTER II.

About a fortnight after Tom Barracliffe's final enrolment as a legislator, Miss Sinclair bethought herself that she hadn't seen Mr. Tracy for several days, and was pleased to remember that he was coming in to dinner that evening. While she was dressing she thought a good deal of her old friend, and wondered he had kept away so long. He had, as she told Lady Cecilia, never aspired to be more than a friend, and he had seen with unmoved eye the rise and fall of a good many suitors. He was free from all petty jealousy, and yet Edith was sure that he did not like Mr. Barracliffe. She remembered a discussion she had had with him, in which she had been led into championing the cause of the society young man.

"The men one knows," she had said, "generally seem rather stupid, because they haven't much to say, and say it badly. But still they are capable of surprising one at times by being so

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much better than they look. They are too much afraid of wearing their heart upon their sleeves."

"Miss Sinclair," Mr. Tracy had replied very seriously, "the belief in the inarticulate young Englishman is one of the most hurtful of our social superstitions, one of the most mischievous of our *idola tribus*. I hope you are not going to worship that silly fetish of society novels. Depend upon it, the average young man appears stupid and indifferent because he really is so."

The conversation had lasted for some time, always in general terms, but each had known that the other was thinking of Mr. Barracliffe.

Edith remembered this talk, and was sorry for Mr. Tracy. She had herself a firm belief in Mr. Barracliffe's talent, and in the real goodness of his disposition, and felt sure that proofs would be forthcoming; but in proportion as it was clear to her that Tom had gained a place in her affections which no one else had held, she felt a certain tenderness for the man who had the second place in her mind. They had never thought of being more than friends, she told herself, but now even that friendship was modified.

Edith sat next to Mr. Tracy at dinner, and was very amiable to him. She made him talk, and listened with the most flattering attention. Only when the talk was of politics she wondered if he guessed that she was thinking of Mr. Barracliffe. Mr. Tracy had good reasons for talking on political subjects—the political situation was just then very peculiar. Various rumours had been afloat, and were now gathering consistency and definite shape. These centred round a great politician, whom his opponents called the first of orators, and his followers the first of statesmen. Mr. Vavasour's position in the world of politics was as remarkable as great experience, unrivalled talents, and the most restless energy could make it; and so, when it was authoritatively stated in one of the newspapers that he had decided to accept what was then known as the New Programme, the greatest interest was excited. The report was at once denied. Mr. Vavasour wrote a long letter to the journal which had published it, but his language was so guarded and ambiguous that the advocates of the New Programme were more than ever certain of their illustrious convert. And not many days after, Mr. Vavasour, in distributing the prizes to a Mechanics' Institute in the North of England, had made a speech which had electrified the whole country. The New Programme was to be adopted

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under a changed name. Mr. Vavasour had accepted the measures he had denounced. Never since the great conversion of Sir Robert Peel had there been so much political excitement. The great question was, how far Mr. Vavasour would be able to carry his own followers with him. A schism in the party seemed inevitable.

It was on these topics that Mr. Tracy discoursed, while Edith listened, and thought of Mr. Barracliffe. How would all this affect him? If there was a split, which side would he take?

Mr. Tracy noticed her abstracted air, and divined whither her thoughts were tending.

He said in a tone which he tried to make indifferent, "Your friend Mr. Barracliffe is one of the new members, isn't he?"

The question was quite unnecessary, and Edith knew it.

"Yes," she said, "he is."

"Now," continued the other, "I wonder what suggested the idea to him! Does he think of becoming a statesman?"

"I am afraid you have a low opinion of Mr. Barracliffe," said Edith with forced calmness. "You seem to think that he has no capacity whatever."

"Not at all," replied Tracy quickly. "He is an expert horseman, a crack shot, and he used to play cricket very well indeed."

His irony was too apparent. Miss Sinclair's cheeks flushed, and she replied with some warmth:

"Perhaps he is not so stupid as you think. He may surprise you one of these days. At any rate, I believe firmly in his ability and in his future."

And Edith darted an indignant glance at him as she left the room with the other ladies.

Tracy felt very unhappy as he lighted his cigarette. He regretted that he had shown so plainly his dislike of Tom Barracliffe, and it was but poor consolation to assure himself that his low estimate of that gentleman was the right one.

"What can she see in him?" he kept repeating to himself, as many a hapless gentleman has done in like case.

In the drawing-room his mortification mounted still higher. Tom Barracliffe had come in, and was talking to Edith. She was interested in his conversation, evidently, for she smiled, and her eyes sparkled. Mr. Tracy could not help watching the two young people, while he tried to talk commonplaces to Mrs. Sinclair.

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Tom had come in from the House of Commons to bring Miss Sinclair a piece of news. Lord Yelverton had made a short speech, in which he had declared himself unable to follow Mr. Vavasour's lead any longer. And Lord Yelverton would have a large following.

"And you, Mr. Barracliffe?" Edith asked excitedly.

Tom looked very grave.

"I shall follow Lord Yelverton," he said. "But I shall not tell anybody so just yet. Only I thought you might like to know it."

Edith nodded solemnly. She felt that she was the possessor of a state secret.

"I am glad you are going to take that side," she said. "Mr. Tracy says——"

She stopped, and cast a hurried glance at the gentleman she had named. Tom appeared not to notice this.

"We shall have lively times in the House," he said. "Yelverton's resignation will be followed by one or two others. Then there will be a Want of Confidence Motion, and a high old debate."

"Ah," cried Edith eagerly, "what a chance for you! You must speak. They will listen all the more because they won't know which side you are going to vote."

Tom laughed a little.

"Would you really like me to speak?" he said.

"Oh, you must, you must!" she replied. "You must show them that you are not going to be a mere dummy, who only votes as he is told."

"And you won't mind it if I make an ass of myself?" asked he. "I dare say I shall."

"I am sure you won't make yourself ridiculous," she said. "I've no doubt you'll succeed very well; of course I shan't expect too much."

"I'll try then," he said. "It's to please you, you know."

She avoided his glance.

"Shall you be very nervous, do you think?"

"I hope not," he replied. "And now, I suppose, I ought to go down to the House again."

"Of course you ought," she said. "Run away." And she gave him a glance which ought to have made him proud and happy.

Mr. Barracliffe took his leave and proceeded to his club, where

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he prepared himself for his legislative duties by winning ten pounds at *écarté*.

Mr. Tracy did not stay very late at Mrs. Sinclair's.

"Going so soon, Mr. Tracy?" Edith exclaimed as he said good-bye. "Shall we see you again before long? We are always in at five o'clock on Tuesdays and Fridays, as you know."

"I can hardly forget that, Miss Sinclair," Tracy replied gloomily.

"You have rather avoided us lately, I am afraid," Edith replied, with an attempt at lightness in her tone.

"Yes, Miss Sinclair," he said slowly. "I have kept away a little. When I came I could hardly speak to you. I had to sit by and watch Titania caressing the long ears of Bottom."

Edith felt very angry at these words; but when she looked at the speaker, and saw how unhappy and dejected he looked, her anger gave way, and she said quietly:

"Of course I know what you mean, Mr. Tracy. You are very unjust to—to Mr. Barracliffe."

After a pause she said, still more gently, "I shall be very unhappy if you continue to think so badly of him."

Mr. Tracy uttered something between a sigh and a groan, pressed her hand for one moment, and then left the house. He walked home to his lodgings, and then sat down and meditated sadly. He thought of Edith, of how he had first met her, and of all their confidential conversations, of how proud he was of her intelligence and her beauty, and of how pleasant their friendship had been.

"And now it is all over," he said to himself. "She is going to marry that tall, good-looking, stupid barbarian. She is very much in love with him—I saw her eyes following him round the room. She liked me very much once, but never like that. She likes me still in a way, but our old friendship is dead, and only wants decent Christian burial; or, if it still lives, it won't survive her marriage to that animal. Between a man and a woman a friendship that doesn't lead to a wedding, will be ended by a wedding. After all, she is only going the way of all heiresses."

Thus did Tracy, sad at heart, soliloquise, and then he fell again to thinking of Edith, her fine pencilled eyebrows and her lovely eyes, and how she had looked when she had said this well-remembered word, and that. After much musing he gave a deep sigh, and took from a shelf a tiny volume which he knew

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well. It was the Enchiridion of Epictetus, and he read in it the familiar doctrine of τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν and τὰ μὴ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

Tom Barracliffe, too, thought a good deal about Edith. He, too, had noticed the eyebrows and the eyes, and knew as well as poor Tracy that Miss Sinclair was remarkably pretty.

This was an additional stroke of good fortune—heiresses so often think it superfluous to be good-looking; and he thought with the greatest pleasure of the suitors Miss Sinclair had had, over all of whom he was going to triumph. Mr. Barracliffe's reading had not been very extensive, and I do not know if he had ever heard of Congreve. But he would have echoed the sentiment of the famous couplet,

> "If there is bliss in love, 'tis when I see
> The heart that others bleed for, bleed for me."

And then this thought wandered on to other fields—to the purchase of yearlings and the Blue Ribbon of the Turf, and the still heavier stakes of Sandown and Kempton. Even gentlemen who don't care for poetry are capable of imaginative flights like this.

A few days later Mr. Tracy called at Mrs. Sinclair's and had a few minutes' talk with Edith alone.

"I want to tell you," he said, "that I am sorry I spoke as I did the other night. You said I was unjust to Mr. Barracliffe, and you are very likely right."

He paused, and looked at her for some time, smiling sadly. "We have been very great friends, haven't we?" he said at last.

Edith bowed her head, and her voice shook a little as she replied:

"And we shall continue so, I hope. Why should everything be changed? Because, if——"

"We might be still the best of friends, if it were not for one thing. I love you—love you so passionately that the thought you will soon belong to another is more than I can bear. And so I am prejudiced and unjust, as you say. I am really saying good-bye, Edith, now. I shall not see you again for some time, perhaps not till after you are married. And if in the midst of all your happiness you can find time to think of one as desolate and unhappy as I shall be, think of me as kindly as you can."

"Mr. Tracy," Edith cried, "I am so sorry for all this; I never thought you cared for me in that sort of way."

"Good-bye," he said again. Their hands clasped, and he was gone.

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For a moment or two Edith wished that she had told him that she was not absolutely engaged to Mr. Barracliffe, as he supposed, and then she was glad she had not undeceived him. For, after all, was he wrong? Had she not virtually surrendered? She tried to imagine how she would feel if everything was broken off between her and Mr. Barracliffe. But she soon took refuge from this dismal prospect by reassuring herself of her belief in him. To the superficial observer he might appear dull and commonplace; she had seen from the first that beneath his external indifference and occasional heaviness there lay hid, talent and character and deep feeling; she was sure of this, and the world at large would be sure of it too, before very long.

In the midst of these reflections poor Tracy was forgotten, and Edith was pleased to have her usual daily visit from Lady Cecilia, who came in full of talk about Tom and the speech which he was going to think seriously about in a few days.

And while the young ladies were employed in this interesting and agreeable manner, Tom had hunted up Mr. Tracy in his suburban lodgings, and was explaining to his old schoolfellow the very private and particular business which had brought him to that unfashionable neighbourhood. Tom felt that his errand was a very disagreeable one, and he was very awkward at first; but the interview was soon over, and he left the house with the comfortable feeling of a man who has got what he wanted and now sees his path straight before him.

Chapter III.

The great debate on the Want of Confidence Motion did not come off till nearly a month later. There had been all the usual preliminary skirmishes of letters, public speeches, meetings, demonstrations. The opponents of the New Programme and its advocates were alike active, and Mr. Vavasour, shaking off the weight of years, had risen to the occasion and produced one of his most magnificent orations. And the excitement deepened as both parties gathered themselves together for their great conflict. And as the time grew nearer, and the issue seemed more and more doubtful, and more and more momentous, the two ladies who were interested in Tom Barracliffe became excited and nervous, and at last absolutely frightened.

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Lady Cecilia begged her brother not to think of entering in such a battle of the giants.

"They will never listen to you, Tom," she said, "when they are waiting to hear the big men. And the papers won't report you at all."

And Edith too began to be quite alarmed at Tom's audacity and her own thoughtlessness.

"Mr. Barracliffe," she said, "I would very much rather that you didn't speak in this debate. If you don't succeed, I shall feel it is my fault. Wait for a less important occasion, when you won't be so nervous."

But Tom shook his head and smiled, and said he had no nerves.

"I shall be cool enough," he said. "I don't think so much of the House of Commons as you do. They are a very casual lot."

Then the day came when, just as Edith was sitting down to dinner, she got a telegram. "Shall try to-night. T. Barracliffe." She was so excited that she rushed off before her dinner was properly finished to Lady Cecilia, and the two young ladies endeavoured to help each other through the trying ordeal of waiting for the result.

It was quite late when Mr. Barracliffe came in.

"I went round to your house, Miss Sinclair," he said. "They told me you were here."

"Well?" exclaimed the two ladies simultaneously, with the most acute interrogative emphasis.

"I've made my speech," Tom said. "At least most of it. I'm not sorry it's over."

They were clamorous for full particulars, but Tom's face wore a stolid appearance, and he vouchsafed only the briefest details.

He had not broken down. He had spoken in a full House, or nearly full. He didn't think his speech was an utter failure. There had been some applause at the end of it. He had received some compliments upon his performance. Compliments didn't, generally speaking, amount to much.

These little scraps of information were all that could be extracted from him, and before long he said he must return to the House.

"You may be sure he has done well," Lady Cecilia said, when her brother had gone. "I know Tom's ways."

"I suppose I must wait till the morning," Edith said. "I've

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told them to send up all the papers to my bedroom as soon as ever they come."

Tom's speech duly appeared in the next morning's papers, and for the next two or three days neither of our young ladies could think of anything else. The speech had been a great success—more than a success, a veritable triumph. There had never been a maiden speech like it. It had come like thunder out of a clear sky, and had astonished, bewildered, electrified the House. It was impossible to say how many votes it had lost to Mr. Vavasour. The leader of the Opposition, speaking shortly afterwards, had referred to it in the warmest terms of eulogy, and Mr. Vavasour himself, in the great oration which posterity will remember as one of his highest efforts, had, with that generosity which was one of his most striking traits, gone out of his way to give it the most emphatic praise. The speech was not a very long one—it occupied just two columns in the *Times*. Both Lady Cecilia and Edith read it over till they knew it by heart. It was amusing to see them on the morning after its delivery, going over it together, radiant, beaming, enthusiastic, picking out fine passages, and declaiming them to each other, with what they judged appropriate parliamentary gestures.

"Just listen to this!" Edith cried enthusiastically. "You know your brother always pretends that he hates poetry, and never reads it, but how beautifully he brings in the quotation from Browning. Here is the passage—

"'Members opposite may exult in the perversion of the Right Hon. gentleman, we can only grieve over it. For years they have prophesied evil of him, and now that their predictions have been in some measure justified, they triumph; while we hang our heads in shame. We cannot follow our great leader in his treason to the State; we can only lament that it is our bitter lot to oppose him.'

"'We that had loved him so, followed him, trusted him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Caught his great language, learned his clear accents.'"

"Isn't that splendid now—'his mild and magnificent eye'—isn't that appropriate?"

Lady Cecilia echoed her friend's enthusiasm, and more passages were picked out and declaimed, and admired, till, as I have said, they both knew the speech by heart.

Then there was the reading of the papers, and picking out

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their comments on the great effort of oratory. All mentioned it; some went very far in their praise. A new orator had arisen, and behind the orator might be discerned the promise of a new statesman. When, after the division, Mr. Vavasour was found to be in a minority, one of the morning papers boldly attributed the result to the successful efforts of a new member.

"One who addresses the House of Commons for the first time can seldom do more than claim an indulgent pity for his oratorical efforts; the maiden speech to which we are now referring is in the proud position of having controlled a division, rejected a Bill, and overthrown a Ministry."

There was more in the same strain, and Edith read the whole of it with the deepest interest and the most profound belief.

To do him justice, Tom bore all his honours meekly. He never alluded to his speech himself, and when others talked about it, and paid him fresh compliments, he said as little as could be said under the circumstances. Edith had to wait before she could give him her congratulations; he didn't call in Park Lane till two clear days had passed. When they met, he began to talk on indifferent subjects, but she soon introduced the great topic.

"I hope I have pleased you," Tom said, in reply to her remarks.

"Indeed you have pleased me very, very much," she replied.

"Then," Tom replied, "may I hope that now"——and he looked her full in the face.

Her eyes dropped, she replied slowly:

"Yes, Mr. Barracliffe." After a little, she added. "I liked you from the first, and now I think I love you, Tom. And I love you, because I admire you so, and because I was the first to find out how clever you are."

The two sat together for some minutes longer, and Tom at last went home happy in the thought that he had won the great prize. Edith too was very happy during those next days and weeks. Everybody thought the engagement "such a suitable one," and said all sorts of sweet things about the man she had chosen. The only drawback to her happiness—it was a very slight one—was that Tom refused to follow up his great success as he might have done. The country had to be roused from its confidence in Mr. Vavasour, meetings were to be held in all the large towns, every one who could speak at all was expected to declaim against the new departure, to denounce the New Programme in

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its thinly-veiled disguise. And much was expected of Mr. Barracliffe. No less a personage than Lord Yelverton had told him that he counted on his help. But Tom preferred for the present to rest on the laurels he had already gained. Edith would have preferred it otherwise, but she let herself be easily persuaded that Tom was right.

"If I go on the stump," Tom said, "I shall see very little of you. There will be time for speech-making by and by."

How could Edith resist such an argument?

Lovers in their happiness are apt to be blind to the feelings of others, and Edith certainly on one occasion was rather cruel to Mr. Tracy. After his farewell to her, he came no more to Park Lane; but she met him by accident at the Academy. He was in that room where architectural designs "waste their sweetness on the desert air." After the first greetings, she attacked him with the question—

"Of course you've read Mr. Barracliffe's speech—what do you think of it?"

There was a cruel triumph in her tone.

Tracy spoke calmly in reply.

"I have read it, Miss Sinclair, and I must say that I do not think very highly of it. It seems to me merely commonplace rhetoric."

"Mr. Tracy," Edith said indignantly, "how you must hate poor Mr. Barracliffe!"

A look of pain passed across his face. Then he glanced at her and said in a low voice:

"I hear that you are to be married in the autumn, Miss Sinclair."

Edith bowed her head in silence. She was a little sorry now that she had met her old friend.

"I hope you will be very, very happy," he said.

"Good-bye," she replied, holding out her hand.

"Good-bye," he said sadly; and then turning away he proceeded to examine one of the architectural designs which interest the general public so little. Edith rejoined her mamma, and as she a quarter of an hour later passed the entrance of the room she had left, she saw that Mr. Tracy was still standing in the same position, examining the same drawing.

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CHAPTER IV.

Tom Barracliffe's reputation did not at all suffer from his inaction. People shook their heads and said he was a knowing fellow who had learnt his own value and did not mean to make himself cheap. He was quite right to keep in reserve for a great occasion.

In fact the only drawback to Tom's good fortune was that he failed both at the Derby and at Ascot to pick out the winning horse. Goodwood made up some of his losses, but before Goodwood came, a very important event happened to him.

There was in the North of England a retired ironmaster whose name was Whiting. This man's blast-furnaces had made him rich, and the speculations which occupied his leisure had almost doubled his wealth. He had no children, no relations of any kind, and was considered eccentric.

Now Mr. Whiting was an ardent politician, and of course had read Tom's famous speech. He had been delighted with it. The idea that it had brought about the defeat of Mr. Vavasour pleased him still more. He saw in Tom Barracliffe a rising statesman, a saviour and defender of his country. As a tribute of his admiration he determined to leave him the bulk of his property. The lawyer was sent for and the will was made. Mr. Whiting's eccentricity was displayed in nothing so much as in his testamentary views; he made a new will on an average about once a month, and though the minor bequests remained the same in all, the principal legatee was continually changed. Sometimes it was an author, whose book had pleased the eccentric old man, sometimes it was some heroic fireman or brave sailor. Only a year before Tom's name was inscribed in the place of favour, Mr. Vavasour himself, then innocent of the New Programme, had been the destined heir. Thus Tom might never have succeeded to Mr. Whiting's many thousands, had not a fit of apoplexy prevented the fickle testator from choosing a fresh favourite.

Tom thus got the benefit of what was really the last will and testament of John Whiting, Esquire, of Comber Hall, in the county of Durham.

Edith was well pleased when Tom told her the good news, pleased with the secret thought that no one would be able to attribute Tom's marriage to mercenary motives.

She enquired after the amount of the legacy.

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"About £170,000," said Tom coolly.

Tom had a good deal to do in connection with this big bequest, and this had necessitated a postponement of the wedding.

"And there is to be an Autumn Session of Parliament, Tom," Edith said one day, when the interesting date was under discussion; "our honeymoon must be a short one, for of course you must be in your seat."

"I don't see the necessity," said Tom curtly. "I don't care about wasting so much of my time in the House of Commons."

Edith looked at him in amazement.

"In fact," he continued slowly, and with emphasis, "I am sick of the Parliamentary business altogether. I have applied for the Chiltern Hundreds."

* * * * *

During the January of the following year Mr. Tracy for the first time in his life was at Monaco. One afternoon he had been to a concert of classical music, and was about to take a quiet contemplative stroll through the beautiful gardens of the Casino, when he was accosted by a gentleman who was sitting at one of the tables in front of the *café* opposite. Turning round, he saw Tom Barracliffe.

Tracy was not very glad to meet his old acquaintance.

"He is on his wedding tour," he thought, "and perhaps getting a little tired of it. He will invite me to dinner, and I shall have to meet *her*."

Still, he couldn't help himself; he shook hands with Tom, and on his invitation seated himself at the table, and had expressed a preference for vermouth. Then he remarked on the beauty of the weather.

"Do you know," Tom said, "you are about the last person in the world I should have expected to see here? Is it *roulette* or *trente-et-quarante?* Are you playing a system?"

Tracy smiled faintly.

"I am working," he said. "Consulting some documents in the Library up there," and he pointed in the direction of Vieux Monaco.

"Well," Tom replied, "you are the first person I ever heard of who came here to read. There isn't much study done at Monte Carlo, you may be sure. I came here about a week ago to pot at the pigeons, and I've done very well, so far."

"How is Lady Cecilia?" asked Tracy.

"Quite well, I believe," said Tom indifferently. "She is going to be married before long."

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"And how is—" Tracy hesitated a little—"your wife?"

Tom burst out laughing.

"I hope she's quite well," he said. "I've no doubt she is. Perhaps she is doing German exercises, or playing scales, or something of that sort. You see," he added in an explanatory tone, "she is certain to be in the school-room, for though I am sure to marry at last, I don't mean to do so for a good time yet. There's no reason why I should."

Tracy listened, bewildered.

"I thought you were married to Miss Sinclair," he said at last, with as much indifference as he could assume.

"Bless you, no," said the other, good-humouredly. "Where have you been living all this time? That was broken off ages ago."

"Broken off?" said Tracy, and felt as he spoke that he was betraying his eagerness for information.

"Yes," replied Tom, with irritating slowness; "the fact is, we didn't suit each other at all. She thought a lot of me, I know, but not in the way I wanted. And I found being a member of Parliament no end of a nuisance. I had to sit on Committees, and they were always wanting me to take part in the debates—it was all owing to that confounded speech that you wrote out for me, and that it took me three days to learn."

"Come," said Tracy, "it wasn't all mine."

"All but a few sentences," rejoined Tom, "which I put in, just to feel that I had some interest in it. And I've no doubt they would have been better away. I don't say anything against the speech. I dare say it was very eloquent, and all that; but I didn't fancy being made to live up to it, as they say. And then, you know, it's not so very jolly getting credit that doesn't belong to you."

Tracy said nothing, but sat looking at his glass.

"I'm awfully obliged to you, all the same," resumed Tom, "because, you see, if it hadn't been for the famous speech, old Whiting wouldn't have left me all his shekels. If you were one of those commercial fellows, you'd want a commission, or something of that sort."

Tracy laughed, and shook his head.

"I heard of your good fortune," he said. "I congratulate you. I don't think I'll make any claim for my share of the transaction."

"Well," the other replied, "I'll give you a piece of news

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instead. Mrs. Sinclair and her daughter are both on the Riviera."

"Do you know where?" cried Tracy excitedly.

"Ah," said Tom, "I thought the news would interest you. Their address is Villa Rousseau, Mentone. Their villa is on the East Bay, not far from the Italian frontier. I would recommend you to call on them."

Tracy promised to follow this advice, and then inwardly revolving many things, he walked slowly down the hill to his lodgings in the Condamine.

Tom Barracliffe watched him disappear round the corner of the Casino, and smiled.

"It's curious," he reflected, "to see how eager some men are for matrimony, and how glad others are to keep out of it. Poor Tracy! I wonder if there is any woman alive that would ever make me like that. At any rate, I hope it won't be for some time yet."

Mr. Tracy was at Mentone early the next day. He didn't intend to call (so he assured himself) at the Villa Rousseau till about half-past four, but he was anxious to see the town—there were one or two interesting graves in the cemetery.

But it so happened that he had not been half an hour in the place before he met Mrs. Sinclair driving a small pony-chaise. She stopped to speak to him—he explained that he proposed to call.

"You had better come up to *déjeuner* at twelve," she said "I'm sure Edith will be glad to see you after all this time."

Tracy, of course, didn't fail to be at the Villa Rousseau at the appointed time, and at five minutes past twelve he was sitting down at the table with the two ladies. The repast was delightful. In the midst of his pleasure at seeing Edith again, he couldn't help contrasting the dainty, prettily served *déjeuner* with the two-and-a-half-francs' *table d'hôte* he generally partook of, at one of the cheaper hotels of Monte Carlo. After it was over, Edith proposed a walk in the garden, and they strolled about for some time, chatting lightly on all sorts of topics.

At last Edith pointed to a little arbour whose roof was formed by trellised vines.

"Let us sit down here a little," she said; "walking in the sun has made me a little tired, I think."

Then, as soon as they were both seated, she turned on him with the direct question—

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"Why did you write that speech for Mr. Barracliffe?"

"Did he tell you that I wrote it?" Tracy asked, evading her question.

"He did at last; but I had begun to suspect it. Mr. Barracliffe got to be very disgusted when any one alluded to his one speech. Nothing could make him venture another. Why did you do it?"

"Well," replied Tracy slowly, not caring to encounter her glance, "partly because he asked me, and I couldn't refuse him. I used to write his verses for him when we were at school together. And then, you know, you were engaged to him——"

"I wasn't," interrupted Edith quickly.

"You were not?" he replied. "I thought so—I was sure of it. And you loved him—at least, so I thought—and you wanted so much to believe in him. Of course, I never thought the speech would make as much stir as it did, but I did believe it would do pretty well; and I thought how that would please you. And then, you know, you had told me that I was unjust to him, and——"

"Don't say anything more," she said, "I understand. But you were very wrong all the same. Think how I was deceived, and how everybody was deceived, and what might have happened."

Tracy did not reply, and the silence lasted for some time, and was felt to be very oppressive by both.

Then Edith rose and said she must go back to the house, and see what her mother was going to do that afternoon.

"Ah, Miss Sinclair," Tracy cried at last, "wait one moment longer. Listen to me for a few seconds only."

Not a few seconds, however, but fully a quarter of an hour elapsed before they quitted the arbour and went in search of Mrs. Sinclair. That lady was sitting out in the verandah, looking up and down the garden for the missing two.

"Mamma," cried Edith, "here we are. *Wie Verlobte sich empfehlen*, as they say in the German papers. Give us your blessing, mamma."

And her hand slipped into Tracy's, which hung loose by his side.

"Mrs. Sinclair," he said, "my happiness only requires your sanction to make it complete."

She stood looking at them doubtfully, glancing from the one to the other.

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"Well, Edith," she said at last, "I've always let you have your own way, and I suppose I shall have to now. Mr. Tracy is very clever, I am sure, and I've no doubt he's very fond of you; so perhaps you might do worse. Of course, you might have done better with all your advantages; but I dare say you don't think so."

Mr. Tracy thanked the lady for even this modified approval, and then he and Edith turned back into the garden and continued to pace its pleasant paths, sometimes talking fast, sometimes with "brilliant flashes of silence."

One of these was ended by Edith's suddenly saying, "Eustace, there is one thing I was right in all the time and you were wrong—I mean the speech. Why did you say it was commonplace? I thought it splendid, and my opinion hasn't changed at all. Do you know I can recite the whole of it?"

"Do," said Tracy; "then perhaps I shall begin to like it."

"Eustace," she said solemnly, "you know what I wanted Mr. Barracliffe to do. Poor man! He couldn't have done anything if he had tried his hardest. But you can. You ought to enter Parliament and make some more great speeches, and do a lot of good, and become famous."

Tracy laughed.

"If you think so much of me," he said, "I shall have to think more of myself. And perhaps by and by I might be bold enough and vain enough to solicit the votes of the free and independent electors of somewhere or other. But there's something else which ought to happen first."

Edith said nothing, though the blush on her cheek showed that she understood him.

"My dear," he went on, more seriously, "I mustn't let you have too high an opinion of me. I may turn out a very dull dog, you know, and I may never be able to repeat the success which I contrived for Mr. Barracliffe. How will you feel if I prove a complete failure in politics?"

Edith lifted her head and looked right into his eyes.

"I shall not mind very much after all," she said softly. "I shall admire you just the same—perhaps all the more."

R. SHINDLER.

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EISENACH AND THE WARTBURG.

"AND the breath of thy mouth is that sharp, invigorating wind which steels the nerves and aspirations of the sons and daughters of Thuringia; makes their hearts susceptible of love, and tenacious of their poetical traditions; which maintains their feeling for the right, their naïve, true nature, and—their heavenly roughness!"

In these words, the lamented German novelist, Marlitt—herself a Thuringian born—bears testimony to the invigorating influence of her native air upon the character and idiosyncrasy of its children. We also, strangers and pilgrims in the land as we are, feel inclined to add our little pæan of praise of their balsamic, tonic qualities, when, after a prolonged spell of the atmosphere of cities, we draw a new breath, physical and mental, upon some bit of moorland of the wild rolling country in the midst of which lies the little red-roofed town of Eisenach. Around us, as far as the eye can see, stretches the vast, undulating Thuringian Forest, "like the green ribbon of an order upon the breast of Germany," and before us, rising out of a richly-wooded height just above the town, is that jewel enshrined in every German heart, Thuringia's Fortress-Queen, the Wartburg of history and song.

Between the thick masses of foliage, still in all the exquisite variety of their first summer tints, are bold projections of conglomerate rocks, down whose rugged sides trickle the streams which go to feed the Elbe, the Weser, and the Rhine, and to water the valleys, whose red soil contrasts with the green of the meadows, in which the mowers are already at work. Green, at least, they look to us from our moor, but we know that with the waving grasses, flowers of every hue—brilliant poppies, gold-hearted marguerites, rich red clover, St. John's wort, great campanulas, the blue scabious, the delicate eye-bright—are falling under the hands of these Tarquins of the scythe. The scent of

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their dying breath is borne upward to us, and mingles with the warm, aromatic, fruity odour of the firs, as we leave the breezy moorland, with its carpet of wild thyme and pale purple heather, and turn into one of the many sheltered paths which lead into the heart of the woods. Here, after plucking some of the almost crimson blossoms of the wild-briar rose, or a bunch of the little white sweet-scented orchis growing among the grass at our feet, we can luxuriate in idleness, listening to the myriad voices of the silence: to the soughing of the wind among the birches and firs, which rise out of their beds of pine-needles, or of "the leaves of yester year," as thick as those in Valombrosa, on all sides of us; to the creaking and swaying of the more slender stems, the song of yellow-hammers and finches, the chirping of grasshoppers, the hum of the other winged insects. Perhaps, if we are very still, a gentle roe comes cautiously from the underwood, and crosses the path just above us, or a bright-eyed red squirrel looks down at us from his aerial perch among the branches; or a "pale-throated snake"—for even this Eden has them—glides quietly up to us, and less quietly, but rather more quickly, rustles off again. Sometimes the scene is diversified by human interest, as when a sturdy peasant, with his long primitive cart, laden with freshly felled trees, and his friendly "Guten Tag," comes by; or a tourist, botanical-box and field-glass on back, spectacles on nose, and hat anywhere but on his head, beams at us with Teutonic urbanity, and "Heiterkeit," and pursues his cheerful way. To these follows, perhaps a little later, a procession of weary-looking women, bent nearly double under huge bundles of firewood, a sad smile crossing their thin, patient faces in laconic assent to our suggestion that the burden is a heavy one—the revolt against its weight being all on our side, none on theirs. They do indeed toil terribly, these Thuringian women—their lives for the most part seem little better than those of beasts of burden; and it is pathetic to see how spiritless and worn quite young women look, and how soon they lose even the smallest pretensions to youth and comeliness. The district about Eisenach is an especially poor one, there being but little to be got out of forest and fell to supply even the very moderate wants of a German peasant population; and thin coffee, potatoes, and black bread, which are their staple articles of diet, can hardly be called food of the most nourishing description. It might have struck us as singular that the women should look, as they do, so much more emaciated and poverty-stricken than

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their lords and masters, had we not observed that in districts in which the people suffer from insufficiency of food, the rough edge of the scarcity often presses its hardest upon the weaker portion of the community, a fact in social economy not without interest to the student of human nature.

This Thuringia must have been always a Spartan sort of mother to her children, if one may judge from tradition and saga. Storms and tempests, floods which washed away whole villages and destroyed countless human lives, oppression from knights and nobles, endless wars, famine, the Black Death, and more than once "a terrible comet," seem to have plagued the land in desolating succession. But the spirit of the Thuringian folk generally sustained them; notably when, upon the Pope sending ministers of the Inquisition to root out the growing heresy from among them, they took the law into their own hands, and falling upon the Papal minions, made an end of them and of the Inquisition, so far as they and their country were concerned, at the same time, in which summary proceeding we perceive a touch of the "heavenly roughness," and impatience of spiritual despotism which were in later times to make of Thuringia the cradle of the Protestant Reformation.

Before that period, however, was the one in which she earned her title to be called the cradle of the German people's song, to touch upon which we must go back to Eisenach and the Wartburg.

The history of the two is so interwoven that it is difficult to think of them separately, but, as a matter of fact, the town is of much earlier origin than the fortress, and dates from remote heathen times, receiving its ancient name of Isennaha from a stalwart smith (Eisenschmied), who pursued his calling on the banks of the never-frozen Nesse; or from the tool (Eisenhammer) which he wielded. So at least says tradition, according to which also Etzel or Attila, "the Scourge of God," lived for some years in the neighbourhood, ruling the fair-haired, blue-eyed "Germanen" with the same iron grasp which already held all the territory lying between the gates of Byzantium and the "amber islands of the Midnight Sea."

After his time fresh hordes of Huns fell upon Thuringia, and though the people, helped by the Franks, made a brave stand against them, their united efforts were powerless to prevent the entire destruction in 1602 of the little town of Eisenach by these barbarians, to be rebuilt later by a Frankish prince, Ludwig,

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surnamed the Bearded, for which he was rewarded by the Kaiser with the title of Count of Thuringia.

It was his son Ludwig the Salier, or, as the people called him, the Springer, who conceived the idea of building a strong fortress upon one of the hills commanding the town. "Wart Berg, du sollst mir eine Burg sein," he said; hence the Wartburg. As usual, a famine distressed the land at the time, and the half-starved peasants were glad to be employed in felling trees and bringing stone from Gotha for the work, in return for grain from the well-filled store-houses of the rich count. All was going on smoothly, when an interpellation occurred, in the form of a not entirely unreasonable protest from the Lord of Frankenstein, to whom the hill belonged. But the wily Springer was equal to the occasion. Causing several hundred basket-loads of earth to be carried up secretly during the night to the scene of operations, he was ready, when Frankenstein made his official protest, with the assertion, accentuated by himself and twelve of his knights thrusting their swords into the newly-transplanted earth, that the new building was entirely on his own ground and foundation. This plea, or the stronger one of might, carried the day, and the work proceeded so rapidly that in three years the first Wartburg was finished.

Ludwig's son, also Ludwig—for princes of that name were as numerous in Thuringia as in France—was the first landgrave, and it was under their successor, Hermann I., that the celebrated Singer-Contest was held on the Wartburg, the hospitality of which this art and splendour-loving ruler threw open to the Minnesingers of his time, making of Eisenach the home of the early German Romantic, the Weimar of the Middle Ages.

Let us imagine ourselves crossing what was once the drawbridge of the fortress, now a strong structure of stone, and passing under the great arched doorways into the court of the Vorburg, our way lying between the beautiful Elisabethengang and Ritterhaus, their 15th-century wattled and plastered upper-stories resting upon the stone foundation-walls, five feet in thickness, which date from the building itself. After which we enter—the old Powder-Tower to our right—the Landgrave's or Prince's House, in which for 350 years the landgraves of Thuringia held court and sway, and which, as an example of a restored princely dwelling of the 12th century, has no rival in Europe. As if by magic we are transported into the "Sturm und Drang" of that wonderful period of the world's history, that earlier Renaissance, in which the

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breath of a new spring-time seemed to have flowed into the veins of men, urging them to chivalrous deeds and artistic creations; when Religion herself, long confined in dead forms, awoke to a vitality and power which sent her votaries to die for the Cross in far Eastern land, or inspired them to those magnificent architectural masterpieces in which it seemed as if the very soul of the Middle Ages was incarnated, when into the mere circumstances and surroundings of everyday existence came a warmth and colour, a refinement and luxury even, hitherto undreamed of, the Golden Age of Knighthood and song, when every knight was a singer and almost every singer a knight. The Minnesang, as the German poetry of the time was called, was, as the name implies, dedicated to the service of love; by which, however, we are to understand something beyond and above the common acceptation of the term, the word "Minne," strictly speaking, meaning "Gedanken," loving *thought* of any one. In this, their spiritualised conception of love, the songs of the Minne-poets are to be distinguished from the bold, passionate, glowing lays of Provence and the South of France, and though the Troubadours undoubtedly influenced the German contemporary poetry in form and certain characteristics, they never, except in a few isolated instances, affected this, the essence or soul of it. With the Minnesinger the woman was an ideal incarnation of purity and gentleness, towards whom the man the Herr, or lord—the lady as Herrin came in later from the Troubadours—cherished a chivalrous tenderness; and so essential a part of his creed was the idea of the reverence due to the reserve of womanhood, that it was *hors de règle* to mention the name of the beloved in the verses dedicated to her praise, Walther von der Vogelweide himself only once alluding to his Lady Hildegande by name in the whole course of the life during which he celebrated her in song.

Although love was the principal theme of the Minnesingers, it was not the only one: they had intense sympathy with Nature in all her moods and changes, and sang of spring with its budding trees and flowers, and of the singing birds and long bright days of summer, in contrast with the withered leaves and dying flowers of autumn, and the earth, locked in winter's snow and ice; all with a youthfulness of feeling and simplicity, even *naïveté* of expression, characteristic of the singers themselves, with also a corresponding irregularity and want of finish of rhyme and metrical form. By degrees, however, especially in the second

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period of Minnesang, which dates from the Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa, about 1189, the intellectual life in knightly circles in Germany received an impulse and elevation, which naturally reflected itself upon her poetry, which gained an independence and fulness of thought, and an art and dexterity of lyrical expression before unknown to it. Melody it never lacked, and it was the melodious ring of these lays, which rendered them so suitable to be sung, as they were originally intended, accompanied by zither and fiddle, to the "Reigentänze" (round-dances) in summer in the open-air, and in the warm shelter of the house in winter.

The period of Minnesang, beginning with the Austrian, Küremberger,—by many believed to have composed, or at least adapted from the still more ancient Edda, the Niebelungen Lied,—reached its zenith with Walther von der Vogelweide and his distinguished contemporaries; after which time a slow and gradual decadence is to be observed. This Walther, the greatest of all the Minnesingers, was born at Botzen in the Tyrol, and, like his brothers in art, began early his wanderings from court to court, and from castle to castle, always with his faithful "fiedel" as a companion. He also sang numberless lyrics in praise of love and his lady; but by the side of these rang out bolder lays of indignation against the overbearing power of the Papacy, and of scorn for the avaricious priests and intriguers, whom he looked upon as the natural enemies of his Kaiser and country; for he was a true patriot, devoted to the Hohenstaufen, and when he saw cause for blame, gave it unsparingly and fearlessly, as his many attacks upon what he recognized as the decline in morality of his time also testify. According to the old chronicle, he left directions in his will that corn should be strewed in perpetuity upon his grave, for the birds, his friends, whom he was said to have charmed with his song, and after whom he was called the Vogelweide; but this legacy was perverted by the priests into the form of rolls, and appropriated to their own use, they thereby justifying him in his grave for some of the hard things he had said of them in his lifetime! He was one of the six singers who met at the great Wartburg contest, to compete in praise of Hermann and of his son-in-law Leopold of Austria, then also a guest there. How the struggle ultimately became one for life and death, and how Heinrich von Ofterdingen (the Tannhäuser of romance) being vanquished by Wolfram von Eschenbach, the noble-minded author of "Parsifal," threw himself at the feet of Sophie of

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Austria, Hermann's spouse, beseeching her to allow the decision to be referred to the great Hungarian poet and magician Klingsor, is all depicted in fresco by Moritz Schwind upon the wall of the room in which it took place.

From the beautiful mullioned window of this same Sänger-Saal, with its arched dais at the end, upon which the singers sat, is a good view of the Hörselberg or Venusberg, as the Minnesingers called it; in which, according to the legend, the noble Knight Tannhäuser was held in durance vile by the goddess, the old Germanic Holda, who, banished from the Walhalla on the triumph of Christianity, found refuge here, and developed into the Venus of a later period. All those who know Wagner's beautiful opera are aware how wonderfully the poet-musician (with his prerogative of licence freely exercised) has described the Knight's enthralment by the enchantress; his return after a time, weary of her spells, to the world of men; his repentance, and the refusal of the Pope to accept the same, scornfully making his pardon conditional upon the bursting into leaf of the pilgrim's staff which he carried. But, as the old song says, *à-propos* of this incident:

> "Ne'er by any priest alive
> Be man condemned unshriven;
> Let him repent, and better strive,
> His sins be him forgiven;"

and, as Wagner has so exquisitely painted in his music, the dry staff budded and the sinner was saved; the motive of the intercession of the Thuringian Princess Elizabeth being an evolution of the genius of the musician himself, and without legendary foundation.

As in duty bound, we made a pilgrimage to the Venus- or Hörselberg; but our sense of the romantic received a slight shock when we found that this whilom mysterious haunt of Frau Venus, or Frau Hölle, as the country-folk called her, was only an ordinary bare, breezy hill; that the little tower on the summit was no mediæval ruin, but a brand-new restaurant; and, worst bathos of all! the dreaded hole which the superstitious for centuries believed to be the entrance to purgatory, a mere cleft in the rock, utilised at that particular moment for the cooling of sundry bottles of German beer! Then at least we realised, if never before, that great Pan was indeed dead, and that even a Richard Wagner could only galvanise him into a semblance of vitality.

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On the same day on which the Singer-Contest was held, was born the patron saint of Thuringia, the holy Elizabeth of Hungary; and it was at the suggestion of the Klingsor of whom we have made mention, that the little four years' old maiden was brought from "far Hungarian land" to be the bride of Hermann's son Ludwig, seven years her senior. She came, "a gift of the morning," with the moderate dowry of 1000 silver marks, but with many rich treasures, among them her cradle and bath of silver, herself the greatest treasure of them all, to be the idol of her adopted country. The universal adoration lavished upon her excited the jealousy of her affianced husband's mother and sisters, who would gladly have had her sent back again, and who, with a view to attaining that end, tried to sow disunion between herself and Ludwig, to whom her love was as a talisman, keeping him from all evil. It was the habit of the royal lover, whenever he had been absent from the Wartburg, to bring with him a present for his girl-bride; but on one occasion he forgot the customary observance, and the envious feminine relatives told Elizabeth that the reason was that he had ceased to care for her. This made her very sorrowful, and she confided her trouble to Vargula, the Prince's cup-bearer, who told his master, as Elizabeth had probably hoped he would. Upon which the young landgrave went at once to his doubting betrothed, and pointing to the distant Inselberg, towering above the surrounding forest: "If that mountain were solid gold, it would not tempt me to believe that my Elizabeth was untrue," he said reproachfully, at which tender reproof her doubts took flight at once and for all. Their marriage took place in 1221, and the attendant festivities in the Wartburg plunged the royal exchequer into difficulties, which Elizabeth's 1000 marks did not go far to relieve. But what was money compared with the countless blessings which this angel of goodness brought down into the land of her adoption? She herself had discarded all her jewels and costly raiment from the day when, returning from visiting her mother-in-law in Eisenach, attired, to do her husband honour, in crown and embroidered robe, she had taken off her jewelled diadem before the image of the Crucified in St. Mary's Church, saying: "Shall not I, a poor girl, be ashamed to wear costly adornment, when Thou art crowned with thorns?" But in her simple attire she was all the more welcome in the houses of her poorer subjects, to whom she was ever a faithful and helpful friend. We are still shown

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St. Elizabeth's Well, below the Wartburg, to which the old and feeble, who could not climb the hill, were carried, to be cheered by her with words of sympathy, or relieved with practical help.

When envious evil-wishers accused her to her husband of extravagance, Ludwig's answer was: "Let my Elizabeth do what she will; so long as Eisenach and the Wartburg remain to me, I have enough." At last, however, when her unbounded charity had begun seriously to cripple his finances, he was obliged to modify the *carte-blanche* he had granted her; and the legend is well known, describing her carrying a basket of bread for some hungry ones in the Marienthal—the spot is called Armenruhe, or Rest of the Poor, to this day—and being met by her husband, who with unusual abruptness, asked, "What hast thou under thy cloak?" Tremblingly, she answered, "I am taking roses into the town." And the pious deception was justified by a miracle, for as Ludwig lifted her cloak, instead of loaves a mass of the sweet flowers was disclosed to his enchanted gaze; whereupon he, thinking he discerned a golden crucifix upon the head of his wife, clasped her rapturously in his arms. The wedded happiness of this ideal pair was not of long duration: in seven years from their marriage Ludwig obeyed the summons which was then calling all pious princes to the Holy Land, and soon fell a victim to one of the fevers which in the Crusades counted a greater number of victims than the sword of the infidel itself.

The conclusion is a sad one. Hunted from the Wartburg by her brother-in-law, who usurped the landgravate to the exclusion of her little sons, Elizabeth passed through much suffering and privation, taking refuge finally in a little cell at Marpurg, where she earned a scanty livelihood by spinning, and died, prematurely worn out by hardship and austerities, at the early age of twenty-four; to be canonised with great ceremony a year after her decease.

It is a long step from her time to that in which a boy of fifteen years of age, Martin Luther by name, might have been seen daily wending his way to the school in Eisenach, in which under the learned rector Johannes Trebonnius, he built up the groundwork of the strong enlightened intellect which was suddenly to flash upon an awakened Europe, kindling a steady flame for generations to come. Not one of the least picturesque bits of the town is the old wattled house, very much out of the perpendicular, with its bulging walls and overhanging quaintly-buttressed upper story, from one of the windows of which, rather

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less than four hundred years ago, Frau Ursula Cotta saw this same Martin Luther stand, wallet on back, in the course of his daily wandering quest of the cast-off food grudgingly bestowed upon him by the more well-to-do burghers; and, attracted by the beauty of his singing voice, and by something more than commonly interesting in himself, adopted him into her home, and smoothed the early steps of life for him.

Of still greater interest is the Luther Room in the Wartburg, at the back of the Ritterhaus, upon which, after going through the Armoury with its tattered banners of the Thirty Years' War, and weapons and suits of mail of many a dead and gone Thuringian prince, we come, as upon a quiet *andante* after a restless turbulent *presto*. After his bold declaration at Worms had placed his life in jeopardy, the Reformer was brought by order of his staunch friend and protector Frederick the Wise, a nominal prisoner, to this little room, "his Patmos," as he calls it, "his hermitage, his windy manor, on the hill above Eisenach, among the birds who sweetly praise God day and night." Portraits of himself, his parents, and princely patron, hang from the mouldering plaster upon the worm-eaten, time-bleached panels, with specimens of his handwriting and the cuirass he wore as Junker Görg, and from the little round windows he must often have looked out upon the Thuringian forest, with the birds longing for liberty, which found expression in one of his letters, in which he said he "would rather be burned upon glowing coals, than half-alive and half-dead in idle loneliness there." Probably the letter was written in a mood of unusual depression, principally owing to the enforced absence of the bodily exercise, so necessary to a man of his physique (and which he afterwards obviated by regular riding and hunting even, always of course disguised), for we find him writing later, "I am laden with work," and going on to describe how he preached twice daily, and the varied labours, intellectual and spiritual, with which his life was in reality richly filled. His exposition of the 8th, 119th, and 36th Psalms could have been no trivial task; to which he added at the request of Duke John of Weimar an interpretation of the Gospel recital of the ten lepers, which he himself looked upon as his greatest literary achievement, finishing with that which posterity regards as his greatest, the translation of the New Testament Scriptures.

Although perforce absent in the flesh from the scene of the mighty struggle going on between the powers of mental slavery and the inquiring freedom-seeking spirit of the Renaissance, he

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was ever in spirit in the thick of the fray, making his presence keenly felt with the fiery reminders of his written speech. Not sparing his friends either on occasion, as when upon the condemnation of his teaching by the University of Paris, the meek Melancthon ("that mild master Philip who took all things so gently") wrote in Latin, what to the fearless outspokenness of Luther seemed a rather tame apology, the latter translated the same into his mother-tongue with this characteristic preface: "Although my dear Philip has given a masterly answer," he said; "yet methinks he has touched them—the Paris theologians —too gently, with too light a plane; but I will come out and bring my axe to bear upon the rude blocks and have forest-law of them."

Schiller says that to live again in art, a thing must first die, and it would seem as though this, which to the impetuous spirit of the fiery Reformer was a virtual death, for the time at least, in the Wartburg, was rather a period of crystallization, from which he was to emerge intellectually and spiritually enriched and concentrated, a very rock for the strivers for liberty of his time to rest upon, against which the opposing powers vainly bent. At last, at the end of eighteen months he refused to be kept any longer from the field of action, and among the many portraits of him by Lucas Cranach is the one depicting him, as, disguised in long beard and worldly attire, he rode by way of Jena to Wittemberg, to rejoice the hearts of his friends by his presence, and as he told his friend Frederick in his blunt fashion, under far higher protection than that of the Elector."

As we look at the old red-roofed, towerless church of St. George in the Eisenach Market-place, with its tiers of galleries, and quaint paintings of the Augsburg Confession, and of the first Protestant celebration of the Eucharist, we wonder whether in the peregrinations allowed to him during the latter part of his friendly imprisonment Luther often bent his steps in its direction, and whether the odd little gilded statue of the hero-saint, his foot upon the dragon's neck, over the fountain hard by, suggested an analogy with his own sharp combat, and cheered him as to its outcome. The space between it, and the little so-called Schloss, with its solitary sentinel, and the Rathhaus at right angles, is on market-days filled with a lively crowd of buyers and sellers from the country round. Goods of all kinds, perishable and otherwise, are here displayed; stalls with bright-coloured handkerchiefs and stuffs, gaudy bead-

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necklaces, combs, braces, and what not, in delightful confusion; with hay, sold by the bundle; vegetables, butter, eggs, and the unappetising-looking little brownish-yellow cheeses, so much appreciated by the educated—or uneducated—taste. But the pleasantest, coolest "bit" is that just under the church and round the fountain, the "Unter den Linden" of Eisenach, especially charming now in these July days, when the limes are in blossom, and exhaling their (one of the sweetest of all) sweet odours. Here the Thuringian peasant women sit, in their turban-like head-gear, the one relic of their former picturesque costume; and here is the best fruit to be had, notably the little wood-strawberries, whose exquisite flavour is thought by some epicures to far surpass that of their garden relatives. Cherries, white, crimson, and black, are everywhere in evidence, enough to supply a thirsty army corps, and after observing the Thuringian penchant for, and consumption of them, we can no longer wonder that the only remark which Schubert was able to evolve in his exceeding nervousness upon being admitted to the presence of the great Goethe—was *à-propos* of the number of cherry-trees on the road to Weimar!

Behind the church is a space devoted to the display of native pottery of various hues, glazed and unglazed, sometimes quaint, but seldom artistic; and near it a row of old-fashioned covered carts, emporiums for potatoes and the loaves of shining black bread. Here the housekeepers skirt about, filling up the lower strata of the pyramid-shaped baskets made of willow withies, which they carry strapped on their shoulders, and which ultimately contain a *mélange* of articles, which only the skill born of long practice could bring into any kind of harmonious arrangement. To whom come those "matres conscripti" of Eisenach, whose purchases have been made betimes, for a little cheerful gossip, wrapped in the wide-frilled, bright-cotton mantles, which we have seen nowhere out of Thuringia, with a kind of sling in front, for the more easy carrying of their offspring; and one of which, when worn by a young and comely woman, with her fair, plait-crowned head bending Madonna-wise over her infant, has a rather picturesque effect.

Looking down at the scene under a solitary, wide-branched linden by the eastern side of the church, is the bronze statue of the greatest of all the tone-poets, Sebastian Bach, here in Eisenach born, and whose little unpretending house is to be seen, not far from Frau Cotta's, in a steep, "murderously-fanged"

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street yclept the Frauenplan. A few weeks ago some of his successors, young musicians of the future (principally pupils of Liszt), celebrated in Eisenach her decanal musical festival. These have all taken their departure, and now our only music of the present is that made by the frogs at night; a kind of harmony which has been described by a modern French writer as "a melodious song; of one note, it is true, but that so exquisitely mournfully harmonious, like detached tones of the principal string of the violin." Be that as it may (and we can imagine there might be dissentient voices!) it is of the musicians of the past of whom we think when we look up at the Wartburg of nights in its moon-illumined Middle-Age and Renaissance beauty; of Walther von der Vogelweide, of St. Elizabeth, of Luther; of all those who in their widely different ways, and according to their lights and capacities, tried to bring something of harmony into "the contrarious moods of men," with a presentiment more or less defined, that—

> "Haply for us the ideal dawn shall break
> And set our pulse in tune with moods divine."

To the last-named especially appropriate seem the words spoken of that poet of our own whose creed was embodied in the lines just quoted, by one who mourned him.

> "Such ending is not death; such living shows
> What wide illumination brightness sheds
> From one big heart to conquer men's old foes;
> The coward and the tyrant, and the force
> Of all those weedy monsters' raising heads,
> When song is murk from springs of turbid source."

FLORENCE ELYE NORRIS.

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THACKERAY'S PORTRAITS OF HIMSELF.

"He was a cynic! You might read it writ
In that broad brow, crowned with its silver hair,
In those blue eyes, with child-like candour lit,
In that sweet smile his lips were wont to wear."

TOM TAYLOR.

NEARLY thirty years ago the *Times* rendered itself remarkable by being the only daily paper to refrain from making special critical allusion to the genius of a man just dead, who was the greatest artist in his own line the world has ever seen, and probably ever will see. Yes, Thackeray lay silent for ever in his house on Palace Green, and Printing House Square afforded him an obituary notice which, by its length, would hardly have gratified the relatives of a defunct City Alderman. "God," said Charlotte Brontë, "made him second to no man," and the world knows now how just was her estimate.

To those of us who hold his memory green, and I own myself in this respect second to none, perhaps no purely selfish disappointment was ever keener than that with which we learnt that no exhaustive biography of this greatest of all novelists would ever be written. The reasons for this are well known, and as honourable to the man himself as to those nearest and dearest who have survived him. But, pungent and heartfelt though our regret must ever be that we, who never knew him or even saw him in the flesh, cannot live, weep, laugh, sympathize and fight his battles o'er again in an authentic biography, and so gain grace and strength to struggle on bravely and devotedly as he did, yet we must ever remember what great things we have received from him, and loyally acquiesce in his expressed desire.

Happily there is no limit placed upon our use of that part of him which he chose to give to the world. Whatever the circumstances of his life may have been with which the world is not

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to be made familiar, whatever the joys, the triumphs, the bitternesses, the despairs which he encountered (and he was as human as any of us) which are never destined to be disclosed, yet, maugre these, what a priceless legacy of human sympathy and appreciation he has made us heirs to! Do you suppose it cost him nothing to tell us what he has of himself under the thin guise of his favourite heroes? Do you suppose that he has only given us of his head, and that his heart's blood is not circulating and palpitating beneath those immortal pages which stir us with their hidden meaning? I tell you no one need regret that he knows not the man Thackeray. He is there for the finding in 'Vanity Fair,' in 'Esmond,' 'Pendennis,' 'Philip,' and perhaps even more in the 'Roundabout Papers,' if you only take the trouble to look for him. You may know him as well as, nay better than, your most inimical friends or your most friendly enemies, and, in his portrayals, be sure he has never spared himself, though with others he has dealt how gently, how tenderly!

Nor is it only in his writings that we find this laying bare of himself, consciously of his foibles, his weaknesses, his cynicism, unconsciously of his manliness, his reverence, his sympathy. As all who know him are aware, before taking to literature it was his intention to become an artist, and he studied in Paris with that object. Mighty little, however, of the art did he learn there. Indeed I suppose no one ever made half such good pictures with less technical skill than he did. That his books, illustrated by his own hand, are among the most satisfactory wedding of pen and pencil in the language is a remarkable fact of which I have written elsewhere. As Trollope has most appropriately remarked, "How often have I wished that characters of my own creating might be sketched as *faultily!*"

It was characteristic of the man to be able to do with worse tools what a skilled workman with every modern appliance would very probably fail in, because of the strength of inspiration which lay behind. Where the inspiration failed, the result was hopelessly bad. For example, when he wanted to take the place vacant by poor Seymour's untimely death, as illustrator of 'Pickwick,' there could be and was no hesitation about his rejection. It requires, most particularly, great technical skill to translate the thoughts of another into picture. And this skill Thackeray certainly did not possess. Like William Blake, though of course *longo intervallo*, his pictures, divorced from their explanatory

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letter-press, are chaotic and unintelligible. Wedded thereto, they are pretty nearly all that pictorial illustration should be.

I want in this article to point out and illustrate one particular phase of Thackeray's deliberate and unsparing use of himself, as not only a psychological model, to which I have alluded above, but also as a painter's model. It is but a small matter, but one, I am inclined to think, which will be of interest to all admirers of his high-towering genius.

Thackeray's drawings are generally looked upon as essentially the garniture of his more serious work, but it must not be forgotten that the pictorial was a distinct and important phase of his artistic development. One might indeed almost say that he was a picture-maker at the quadrature, a novelist at the full.

As novelist, we know that the covering which he drew over what he felt were his own shortcomings was in effect diaphanous. He never intended to hide himself. He no more expected people to be unaware of his presence than the Queen does when she travels as the Countess of Balmoral. All he wanted was that his confidences should be respected. One is reminded of Addison's heroine "whose bosom appeared all of crystal, and so wonderfully transparent, that I saw every thought in her heart."

So it was too in his pictures. He looked in the glass and poked fun at himself and others with the utmost impartiality. His broken nose, his "goggles," his pursed-up mouth, "those blue eyes with child-like candour lit," indeed himself we find cropping up in his drawings in the most unexpected manner, and in all sorts of compromising and ridiculous situations.

He was not over-considerate of his own feelings when, in America, as Trollope tells us, "he met at dinner a literary gentleman of high character, middle-aged, and of most dignified deportment. The gentleman was one whose character and acquirements stood very high—deservedly so—but who, in society, had that air of wrapping his toga round him, which adds, or is supposed to add, many cubits to a man's height. But he had a broken nose. At dinner he talked much of the tender passion, and did so in a manner which stirred up Thackeray's feeling of the ridiculous. 'What has the world come to,' said Thackeray out loud to the table, 'when two broken-nosed old fogies like you and me sit talking about love to each other?' The gentleman was astounded, and could only sit wrapping his toga in silent dismay for the rest of the evening."

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So we see all through, in castigating others he never dreamt of sparing himself. In a collection of his letters, published by Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., there is an admirably humorous pen-and-ink drawing by him of an imaginary equestrian statue of himself. If any one for a moment doubts that the face of Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh is that of Mr. William Makepeace Thackeray, transferred from a body of six foot four inches to one of at least a foot shorter, they have but to put the above sketch side by side with half the pictures in the Christmas books to be convinced. It only differs from these portraits of M. A. Titmarsh in that the six foot four is, instead of being curtailed, rather accentuated than otherwise.

Or, if additional evidence is wanted, compare with these the portrait of Thackeray in the picture of the Fraserians, published at the beginning of 'A Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters,' by Daniel Maclise. The likeness of this face to that of Mr. Michael Angelo Titmarsh is undeniable.

At the commencement of 'Mrs. Perkins's Ball' we find an exceedingly clever blending of ball-room exigencies with the requirements of the conventional title-page, and, tucked away in the right-hand corner behind Mr. Beaumaris, "the handsome young man," we find Mr. Michael Angelo Thackeray, as we are inclined to call him, broken nose, spectacles and all.

Nor must mention be omitted of that young gentleman's armorial bearings which surmount the door—a pair of spectacles crossed on a shield, surmounted by a fool's cap and with two jesters' wands as supporters.

Thackeray did not habitually sign his drawings; but in some few instances this crossed pair of spectacles may be found giving a picture his *imprimatur*. As one example of this, the reader may refer to the frontispiece to 'Dr. Birch and his Young Friends,' where this symbol will be found on the paper held in the dunce's hand.

On the title-page to 'Our Street,' the intent observer will again discover Mr. Titmarsh's portrait. Miss Clapperclaw is here represented looking out of her accustomed window and keeping her eye on the doings of her neighbours. She has screwed against that window, at a convenient angle, one of those detective-looking glasses by which an occupant of the room can see without herself being seen. In that mirror behold the reflection of an infinitesimal gentleman walking down the street, so small indeed that three of him, top-hat, spectacles

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and all, might easily be accommodated on one's little finger-nail.

On page 70* of the same Christmas book we find him drinking tea in the background, whilst the detestable Clarence Bulbul in the foreground is telling the lovely Miss Pim that she would fetch twenty thousand piastres in the market at Constantinople. On page 76 we find him talking to the charming Miss Short, whilst Charley Bonham, near at hand, is pouring out his fulsome rhapsodies in the ears of Diana White. "Lovely, lovely Diana White; were it not for three or four other engagements, I know a heart that would suit you to a T." On page 78, the incorrigible Michael is flirting in the doorway with Clarissa Newboy, who is in a pink *paletôt* trimmed with swansdown. That is the last we have of him as a gay bachelor in 'Our Street.'

He next turns up in 'Doctor Birch and his Young Friends' as assistant-master in the Academy at Rodwell Regis, and Professor of the English and French languages, flower-painting and the German flute. On page 87 we find him engaged in teaching "the young idea how to shoot." On page 100 he is discovering Miss Birch *eating jam with a spoon out of Master Wiggins' trunk in the box room.* On page 113 he witnesses Lord Gaunt's eldest son, the noble Plantagenet Gaunt-Gaunt and nephew of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Steyne, flirting with Miss Rosa Birch. "What a pretty match it would make! It is true she has the sense on her side, and poor Plantagenet is an idiot; but there he is, a zany with such expectations and such a pedigree!"

In the Christmas of 1850 again we have our young gentleman making a voyage on the Rhine in company with "the Kicklebury's" and other distinguished personages. On page 163 he flirts with pretty Miss Fanny. On page 175 he is making a wry face over the natural waters of Rougetnoirburg. On page 183 he gives a withering glance of scorn at the inconstant Fanny Kicklebury, who has thrown him over for the heavy dragoon. Whilst on page 193 we find him contemplating that German bed which eventually he was not destined to enjoy alone, but to pass the night in company with anthropophagous wretched reptiles who took their horrid meal off an English Christian.

* The references in this article are to the collected 'Christmas Books,' in Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.'s Popular Edition.

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As early as 1842, before his permanent connection with *Punch*, we find in the 'Irish Sketch Book' two or three portraits of himself with uncurtailed body. The first and only noticeable one is a picture of Mr. Titmarsh sitting on a crowded Irish car, with his arm encircling the waist of a demure little Irish lass, and it was not until a hideous row of houses informed them that they were at Killarney that his companion suddenly let go his hand and, by a certain uneasy motion of the waist, gave him notice to withdraw the other too. "And so," he goes on, "we rattled up to the 'Kenmare Arms;' and so ended, not without a sigh on my part, one of the merriest six hours' rides that five yachtsmen—one Cockney, five women and a child, the carman, and a countryman with an alpeen, ever took in their lives." But life is not always rosy, and woman is not always kind, and the next day he gets a severe snubbing from his yesterday's fair and kind companion. *Sic transit.*

In his drawings for *Punch* we are not often favoured with his "counterfeit presentment." Indeed in only one of his larger pictures does he make use of himself as a model. The scene is laid in a railway carriage on the Great Western Railway. Thackeray is represented, apparently reading the *Sunday Times*, but in reality listening to a conversation between an old gentleman and a Miss Wiggetts. By Thackeray's side is a co-contributor to *Punch*. Who this is I have not discovered.

The above-mentioned is one of a series of drawings called "Authors' Miseries."

He wrote many papers for *Punch* under the pseudonym of "Our Fat Contributor," but in none of these does he identify himself with the author, or favour us with a representation of his own personal appearance.

In an account of adventures at Brighton it is some one very different from Thackeray who, mounted on one of Jiggot's hacks, goes out riding with young Goldenose and his lovely sister Violet to his own very great satisfaction, until he is induced to change horses with Captain de Bosky, and finds the change from the animated Sedan-chair he had hired to the wicked-looking beast, which rejoiced in the name of "Purgatory," anything but a change for the better.

Later on, however, in 'Brighton' by "*Punch's* Commissioner," which place he calls "London *plus* prawns for breakfast and the sea air," we have a portrait of him without his spectacles, with his full six foot four complement of body reclining comfortably in, and

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absolutely filling an ordinary fly. It is driven by a delicious postillion in a pink striped-chintz jacket, which may have been the cover of an armchair once, and straight whitey-brown hair and little wash-leather inexpressibles—the cheapest caricature of a post-boy eyes have ever lighted on.

In 1847, the same epidemic was raging that we have been groaning under in this present year of grace, and he contributed an amusing article called "Punch and the Influenza," accompanying it with a series of sketches of the scenes which Mr. P. saw as he called on his suffering contributors.

"The celebrated Br—wn," as he calls himself, "was found thus" (here follows a spirited sketch of himself). "Yes; he was in a warm bath composing those fine sentiments, which the reader will recognize in his noble and heart-stirring articles of this week, and as resigned and hearty as if he had been Seneca. He was very ill, and seemingly on the point of dissolution, but his gaiety never deserted him.

"'You see I am trying to get the steam up still!' he exclaimed, with a sickly smile and a look of resignation so touching, that Mr. Punch, unable to bear the sight, had only leisure to lay an order for a very large amount of £ *s. d.* upon the good-natured martyr's clothes-horse, and to quit the room."

Again, in 'Sketches and Travels in London,' we find a full-length portrait of him standing bolt upright, and facing the reader alongside of, and illustrating the first monosyllable "I" of the letter to "Bob" called "Out of Town," to say the least, an original method of announcing an author's identity. In the same series we find him in "Mr. Brown takes Mr. Brown the younger to the Club," having a little fun at his own expense. The article opens with a picture of young Horner lying on his back in the library fast asleep, with 'Pendennis' resting unread on his stomach. He made use of the same idea in one of the series 'Trials of Authors,' but in this latter did not make himself the hero of his own fun.

These, then, are a few of the many occasions upon which Thackeray used himself as an artist's model. The admirers of this great man, who has been ranked by no mean authority with Shakespeare and Balzac, will find it interesting to have an idiosyncrasy of this kind, superficial though it is, brought to their notice. Surely none, who have ever been in more than surface touch with the master, can ever fall away from allegiance to him, and it is one of my principal objects in writing this paper to

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so bring others into contact with his genius that, by getting them first to take an interest in a master which is not essentially inherent, they may be tempted to search further and find those constituent principles which are more worth the seeking.

Rembrandt, Rubens, Velasquez, indeed nearly all the greatest of the world's painters, have given us portraits of themselves, but they have taken good care, one and all, to so arrange the lights and pose as to give us the man of genius with his profoundest intellectual expression. It was, I think, left for Thackeray to portray himself in the most unbecoming lights and under the most undignified conditions.

It was a deep-seated principle with him always to taste the quality of his own whip before he flagellated the shoulders of others. And, if we find this in studying his pictures, how much more do we find him unsparing of himself in his writings! In using himself as a whipping-boy for our sins he probably believed that he was making himself as despicable as a Rousseau. He forgot that, in laying bare his foibles, his weaknesses, the evil promptings of his heart, he could not altogether conceal from view his moral force, his human sympathies, and his hatred of cant and meanness.

> "Each thought was visible that rolled within
> As through a crystal case the figured hours are seen;
> And heaven did this transparent veil provide,
> Because he had no evil thoughts to hide."

Let us not then in these days of hustle and excitement forget altogether the man who preached a life-long sermon from the text *Vanitas Vanitatum*. He has a lesson for us all which we shall do well to learn.

GEORGE SOMES LAYARD.

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GREAT STEAMSHIP LINES.

VI.—EAST THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL.

ALTHOUGH the history of almost every steamship line now finally established is full of records of arduous struggles, of great disasters, and of well-earned success, that of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company is the nearest to romance of them all. It includes in its story the making of the Overland Route, the improvement of the route by Lieutenant Waghorn, and the cutting of the Suez Canal, which has done so much towards the development of Oriental trade. In its character there is something quasi-official, something half-military; its mail system alone makes it almost as much an integral portion of the Empire as the very navy itself; it is difficult for the majority of Anglo-Indians to imagine India reached by any other line of steamships; the very decks of its vessels have become, as it were, classic ground in light literature.

This line, so commonly called shortly the P. & O. that many people not conversant about steamships imagine that title one word of unknown meaning, was founded in 1837. Even among the less ignorant, very few know that the Peninsula referred is *the* Peninsula of Spain and Portugal, and not that of Hindostan, to such an extent has the Oriental business of the Company overshadowed the merely European trade with which it began. In those days, more than half a century ago, the mails went from Falmouth to Lisbon by sailing vessels, "packets," as they were commonly called, which frequently took three weeks on the passage. Messrs. Willcox and Anderson of London, when they induced the Government of that day to subsidize vessels for a monthly service to Vigo, Spain, Oporto, Lisbon, Cadiz and Gibraltar, practically founded the Peninsular and Oriental Company, which now owns 198,000 tons of shipping, and carries the mails to the Farthest East.

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The next step taken was extending the line to Malta and Alexandria, and in 1839 the Company determined to run vessels between Suez and India. Up to this time the East India Company had steamships on that route, but did not afford the travelling public any great satisfaction. The P. & O. boats now went as far afield as Ceylon, Madras and Calcutta. In 1884, with a further subsidy, they put steamers on the route to Singapore and Hong-Kong.

The Overland Route between the Mediterranean and the Red Seas has seen several changes in character. Long before Europe was inhabited by Teutonic races, dwellers in Egypt and Arabia made their journey on the backs of camels. Then in 1845 Lieutenant Waghorn of the Royal Navy opened it to European travel. In those days travellers landed at Alexandria, and the first portion of the journey was accomplished in barge-like boats towed by steam-tugs in the Mahmoudieh Canal. From Atfeh, where the Canal enters the Nile, steamers ran to Cairo, 120 miles distant. Thence the route lay across the desert 90 miles long, which took some 18 hours. The transport of cargo by such primitive methods was even more difficult than that of passengers. Everything was carried by camels. Not only was cargo carried thus, but the water for the wayside stations and the coal for the Company's steamers in the Red Sea also. It was absolutely cheaper to transport it in this way than to send it round the Cape of Good Hope in sailing vessels. The opening of the railway across the Isthmus of course revolutionized matters greatly, but the cutting of the Suez Canal at first threatened to ruin the P. & O. Company.

The results of the Suez Canal on trade, and the shipping trade generally, are even yet hardly appreciated by the outside public. It is the Canal which has accentuated the natural tendency of steamships to supplant sailing vessels. For one thing these latter could not easily use the new road to the coast on account of the cost of towage, while the Red Sea is so liable to calms that it becomes dangerous to large ships which are not under the control of steam. Moreover, the date of the opening of the Canal approximates closely to the common introduction of the compound and comparatively high-pressure engines. Now too began the rapid differentiation of steamboats into passenger and cargo boats. The result of this is seen in the rise of the British India Steam Navigation Company, which started soon after the opening of the Canal with four boats, bought from the Wilsons

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of Hull. This line is the great cargo line of the East, and owns some 260,000 tons of steamers, if the British India Associated steamers are considered part of it, as they may very properly be. The P. & O., on the other hand, has become more purely passenger-carrying than it was, even though it owns at present some six cargo boats.

Independently of the change in the character of the vessels engaged in the trade, the effect of the Canal has been to so enlarge and specialise Oriental business that the entrepôt, or distributive business of London, has been seriously interfered with. Much of the cargo which formerly came to that city, now goes direct to Continental ports of distribution. Yet it is only relatively, not positively, that London has fallen off. The Belgian, Dutch and German trade has so increased, that it pays to load directly for their ports, whereas, in the old days, London was their trade centre.

The new conditions after the opening of the Canal necessitated an entire change in the methods of the P. & O. The newer, faster and cheaper steamers woke the Company up. Their comparative monopoly was threatened, the revenue fell off nearly half a million. And in these circumstances the English Post Office did its very best to ruin a company which had done more in the way of fast and regular mail-carrying than any other line of steamers at that time. For some curious red-tape reason, the Post Office refused to allow the mails to be taken through the Canal, although the Company offered to lessen very materially the time taken to convey the mails to Bombay, China and Australia. Finally the authorities consented to allow this to be done, provided the Company would agree to take some £30,000 per annum less. This was not accepted, and the contracting parties quarrelled. The result was that the Directors landed the mails at one end of the Canal, sent them overland and picked them up at Suez, as had been done before the Canal was opened. And the Post Office could not prevent them doing so, for the Company were acting in strict accordance with the letter of their contract. Finally the quarrel was patched up in 1874, though the Company had to consent to take £20,000 less per annum. But from that day the mail-carrying business of the Company has been such as to afford even the most hide-bound officialism little chance of grumbling. Looking up the records, published by the P. & O., it will be seen that out of 468 mail deliveries during the last three years, only seven instances occurred when the mails

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were even an hour late. On the other hand, 457 mails reached their destinations in advance of contract time. For the management of this Company is not behind the times. Vessels have lately been added to the fleet which are over 6000 tons and 7000 H.P. Considering the length of the voyages, these vessels are quite large enough and powerful enough to pay. It is to be remembered that, owing to the expense of coal, very great speeds cannot be maintained in long voyages if any profit is to be expected.

And now-a-days, seeing how low outward freights have fallen, it is a curious question as to whether cargo-carrying from England really pays at all. Present freights are now down in some cases to less than *7s. 6d.* a ton. This hardly pays the Canal dues. It is the homeward cargo trade which is really valuable. And this is greatly in the hands of the British India Steam Navigation Company, at any rate as far as India itself is concerned, with their 102 vessels. A very large proportion of the smaller boats run on the coast of India, only coming home when it is necessary to renew or refit them. They pick up cargo everywhere, and trans-ship it into the larger vessels running on the great trunk lines. They are ready to forward goods on through bills of lading to the most inconsiderable ports; they carry native passengers, and take Moslem pilgrims over the sea on their way to Mecca. But their business is not confined to India, it takes in Burmah, the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, New Guinea, and even New Ireland to the north-east of New Guinea; they send vessels to Queensland and thence round Australia; they run south from Bombay to Mauritius; their vessels are well known in the Persian Gulf; and rounding Cape Guardafui they go to Mombasa, Lamu, and Zanzibar, being there nearly in touch with the Castle Line. And this gigantic branch of the business is hardly twenty years old yet!

It is probable that the Australian part of the trade is the least profitable, both to the Peninsular and Oriental and the British India Steam Navigation Companies. The Shaw, Savill, and Albion Company compete with them there, and so does the Orient Line. Some time ago there was an arrangement made between many of the rival companies similar to the "pooling of profits" practised by Western American railroads, but one private ship-owner who took £15,000 a year out of the "pool" was not satisfied and broke loose. As he has yet some years to run of a contract to take home meat from Queensland at a profit

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which enables him to cut outward freight to nothing, the effect has been disastrous to those companies which have no heavy mail subsidies to help them. This, of course, is only one example of excessive steamship competition.

As regards the passenger trade to the Far East, not including Australia, it is to be noted that neither of these two great companies carry other than first and second saloon passengers in their large vessels. This is due, of course, to the fact that there is no such thing as emigration to Oriental countries. Seeing that they are not pressed to provide this accommodation, it might have been expected that a company like the P. & O. would have succeeded in solving a problem of passenger accommodation which is, not unnaturally, of burning interest to those who are compelled to take long sea-voyages, and that is the question of single-berth cabins. To most men, and certainly to every woman, it is intolerable to have to share a cabin with a stranger. The want of privacy is the sole thing which makes ocean travelling repugnant to many people. To share a double-bedded room in old-fashioned inns in the coaching days was bad enough, but at any rate there was a reasonable space to move in. It is not too much to expect that single berths shall be the rule. Nowadays it is necessary to pay at least 50 per cent. to secure the vacancy of the second berth. It should be so arranged that a less price would pay the owners of the vessels. There might be a loss of about 33 per cent. in space, though it would probably be less, if the single-berth plan were adopted. In some steamers there are berths, dovetailed, so to speak, one being above and the other below, yet both in separate cabins. The public has yet to be told why this could not be more generally arranged. I believe that one of Wilson's new boats running to Norway is constructed on this plan. Even if it meant a considerable rise in fares, travellers would be ready to pay the necessary increase.

It does not seem wholly extravagant to suppose that some of these large companies might find it worth their while to join together to solve not only this problem, but many others which bid fair to become pressing before very long. And one is the question of increase of speed. When first commencing this series of papers, I was of opinion that faster speeds were only a matter of increased boiler space and more powerful engines. But a criticism of my remarks in 'Invention' has since led me to alter that opinion. The writer said, "Engine power is of course a prime factor in any question of increased speed, but that to our

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minds does not present anything like the same practical difficulty as to the best speed-giving lines of hull construction. Ever since the "swift triremes" of the ancient world evoked the admiration of contemporary critics, the problem of the best lines has vexed the soul of ship-builders. How little the progress made really is, may be judged from the fact that a Chinese slipper-boat or a Malay prahu will give odds to the primest specimens of a dock-yard or private ship-builder's outturn, and beat it at nearly every point of sailing. The Chinese were ridiculed some fifteen years ago for putting engines into some of their lighter junks to cruise after pirates. But it was found after all that, except in heavy weather, the duck-breasted, bamboo-sewn, unwieldy native craft could actually steam better than Her Majesty's gunboats.

The writer went on to say this led to the conclusion that if smooth weather only were met with, the problem would be robbed of half its difficulty; for in an Atlantic gale neither ducks nor junks could hold their own. This made me remember that I once saw in the lake in St. James's Park, when a tremendously heavy gale was blowing in London, a number of ducks riding head to sea, "hove to," as it were, and making, in nautical phraseology, very "good weather" of it, in waves which would inevitably have swamped any model boat of the same size as these birds, if it had not been built on something the same natural lines. If the problem is to find speed with seaworthiness, as it undoubtedly is, the model of the duck seems to promise very well. It is to be remembered that in making our steamers deep and sharp we are probably led away by the build of sailing ships. Builders have by no means shaken themselves free of tradition; they have not yet learned that when the propelling power is below the surface of the water, as it is in steamers, that the lines required to give the best results will in all likelihood be very different from those needed when the propelling force is above, as in the case of the wind. It is evident that in most winds, indeed in all except when the vessel has it dead astern or a little on the quarter, the leverage of the deeply set hull is needed to prevent leeway. But in a steamer the only leeway is not an incident in her motive force, it is caused by her height out of water. The power of the wind on a sail area often tends to drive a vessel down; the power of the screw lifts, and would lift still more if the vessel had a rising floor forward. This suggests that we have been on the wrong tack in building steamers of a narrow beam and great draught. It is worthy of serious note

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that the resistance increases much more with the draught than with an extended beam. A very significant, if slight, illustration of this may be found in thrusting even so small a thing as a light walking-stick into the water as we move along in a row-boat. After a certain depth, and that not a very great one, a man's whole strength is unable to keep the stick at right angles with the surface of the water. It has been proved by American yacht-builders that great beam and light draught must inevitably pay as far as speed is concerned. If the danger of capsizing were by any means entirely obviated, even large sailing vessels might be broad and shallow. The fastest things in the world, driven by wind, are the ice-yachts on the frozen Hudson, where the draught is absolutely nil. It is true that they are dangerous and may capsize, but in steamers the only danger of their "turning turtle" comes from their want of beam when they are light, as in the case of the sinking of the *Austral* in Sydney Harbour.

The modern small cargo, with very limited engine power, seems to some extent to point the way. Such a tramp steamer as I spoke of in my last article, is bluff in the bow and round or indeed almost flat in the bottom; yet she easily goes 8½ knots. It is at least probable that her speed might have been greater had she been broader in the beam and still less in draught. The future fast boat will very possibly be a broad-beamed, shallow boat, with a great rise in her floor. I cannot but remember seeing a lake steamer built in British Columbia. She was nothing but a gigantic 'scow' or punt; a parallelogram in form, with the beam almost half the length, and a draught of about four feet when loaded. Yet with primitive engines and small power, she ran 12 knots, and passed the "riffles" or rapids between the Kamloops and Great Shushwap Lakes without any difficulty.

If such corporations as the Peninsular and Oriental, and the British India Steam Navigation Companies, to say nothing of the other great lines, were to join together, employ the best available men, and make a series of exhaustive experiments *à priori*, without being hampered by false analogies and mere tradition, it would be no vague dream to expect that land and sea travel would be more equal in point of speed.

One point of considerable interest to Englishmen is that the Peninsular and Oriental Company employ by far the largest proportion of Lascars, or East Indian sailors, in manning their vessels. The word "Lascar" is usually loosely employed by

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seamen to include Malays and almost any true Oriental. The English sailor is not, as a rule, accurate in his employment of general terms, for to him "Dutchmen" include all races from Holland northward to Scandinavia and Finland, and "Dagos" all Europeans south of Flanders as far as Greece. Sir Thomas Sutherland, the Chairman and leading spirit of the P. & O. Company, is in favour of employing Lascars in the proportion of at least two and a half to one Englishman, though it is probable if his boats used the Cape route, taken by the Shaw, Savill and Albion boats, and ran in latitudes of cold and stormy weather, he would change his opinion. I remember being off Cape Leuwin, the south-west point of Australia, in a sailing vessel, in which only seven out of forty-five Lascars would go aloft to shorten sail in what might, without exaggeration, be described as a hurricane. Generally speaking, they are not trustworthy in any great emergency. It seems a pity that there is no greater desire to employ Englishmen in English vessels, seeing that we may any day need seamen for the navy who have been trained in the right school. The reports continually set about as to English sailors being drunken and hard to manage, are for the most part libels. The fact of the matter is that Englishmen, when properly treated, are as fine sailors and as well-behaved men as can be found from Scandinavia to the Grecian Archipelago; but nowadays they require better treatment than they get. Overworked as they are on undermanned ships, it is little wonder that they drink when ashore. But better treatment always gets better service. If that is not given, naturally the less advanced races will be more subservient. In the minds of few seamen before the mast is there any doubt that the occasional preference among ship-masters and owners for "Dutch" crews is due to their greater readiness to put up with hard fare, poor wages, and insulting language. Although there may seem to be some excuse for the P. & O. employing Lascars on the ground that they stand the hot weather in the Red Sea better than Englishmen, such an excuse is seen to be very hollow, when our countrymen can work in the stoke-hold of the very vessels whose decks are reckoned too hot for Europeans.

The following condensed statistics concerning the Suez Canal traffic, though often published, are always of interest. In 1870 the net tonnage passing through the newly-opened way was 436,609 tons; in 1875, 2,009,984; in 1880, 3,057,421; and in 1885

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it reached a maximum of 6,335,753 tons. In two following bad years it dropped half a million tons. As to the receipts of the Canal, in 1870 they amounted to 6,387,205 francs; in 1880 they were 40,737,438; in 1887, 59,198,627 frs. Of the traffic, over 75 per cent. in 1887 was English tonnage.

MORLEY ROBERTS.

BY LETHE'S BANKS.

IF I, to-night, should stand beside that wave
Where men the burden of remembered sin
Lay down—if all that has and might have been
Were heavy then on me, the tortured slave
Of Furies crime-begot—I would not save
My soul the haunting horror of past sin
Nor from that gracious flood by one draught win
The boon of sweet forgetfulness I crave.

For better 'twere that through eternity
The vision of life's sea with brooding night
Black, storm-swept, strown with wrecks should curse my sight
But over which one lone, pure star you beam,
Than, dearest, that I take from that dull stream
A life regenerate that knows not thee.

INIGO DEANE.

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BEGUN IN JEST.

BY MRS. NEWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "HER WILL AND HER WAY," "WITH COSTS," "THE LAST OF THE HADDONS," &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

A ROLAND FOR AN OLIVER.

MABEL had ceased to find any pleasure in joining the luncheon party. But Mrs. Brandreth, whose invitations had at first been so unwillingly given, now made a point of the governess appearing with the children, and this notwithstanding—perhaps partly on account of—the evident reluctance with which she was obeyed. She had been made to give invitations against her will, and now it pleased her to retaliate by making Mabel accept them against hers. She saw that it was an ordeal to Mabel, and thought she understood why. Mr. Harcourt was paying his hostess a great deal of attention, and the governess's grave, not to say angry, looks seemed to bear but one interpretation. Think what Reginald might about it, Miss Leith must have begun to indulge hopes of attracting Mr. Harcourt herself, and, now that she was obliged to give them up, could not conceal her disappointment.

"It looks very much as though she were jealous," thought Mrs. Brandreth, not averse from the idea that she could be the cause of jealousy in an attractive girl of eighteen.

Mabel, in fact, very much disapproved of Gerard's bearing towards his hostess, but for a very different reason from that imputed to her.

"Why cannot she see that he is amusing himself at her expense?" she thought, looking on with angry eyes. "Why does he pay her those stupid compliments? Why does she permit him? She ought to be offended, and she ought to make it evident to him that she is!"—throwing back her head and

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looking offended enough for both. She found it difficult to prevent herself giving more open expression to her thoughts, and to reply to Gerard's occasional word to her as the governess should.

Had not Mrs. Brandreth been under the impression that she had discovered the cause of Mabel's bearing towards Gerard, she might have suspected that the two knew more of each other than they wished it to be thought they did.

Aubyn was just himself in his demeanour towards Mabel, treating her precisely the same as he would any other lady in her position—with courtesy and respect. But Gerard took such evident and elaborate pains in acting the part of a stranger, that he sometimes rendered the position very difficult for her. What was worse, she was beginning to see that he was doing this from malice prepense, with the express purpose of causing her to forget the *rôle* she was playing, and make herself ridiculous for his private amusement.

Deferentially addressing the governess, he would ask for information upon some out-of-the-way question in constitutional history, or what not, which she angrily told herself was only meant to expose her weak points.

"Statute 'Quia Emptores' indeed! He must know that she was not likely to be familiar with that; and as though he wanted information and had not everything at his fingers' ends. It is really too bad!"

But when one day he went further, suavely inquiring how it was she had so much patience with her little charges and contrived to manage them so well, even "daring" to express his opinion that hers must be a delightful occupation, she hurriedly took up the glove and prepared for battle.

"Do you really think so, Mr. Harcourt? Have you had experience in the way of teaching, or any other special kind of work? I know men of means and leisure like to show their capabilities for doing something in these days."

Those who knew him well were aware how much Gerard Harcourt enjoyed getting a counter-thrust of this kind. But he looked properly impressed and disconcerted, only giving her in return, for her special behoof, a momentary flash of humour from between his half-closed eyelids, as he deprecatingly replied:

"No; I cannot claim to have had experience in any special work, Miss Leith."

"But do you not employ yourself in any way then,

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Mr. Harcourt?" she urged. "Do you really mean that you do nothing—not even read? It must be so very annoying to have to ask for information. At Oxford, too, were you not? I cannot imagine how you contrived to avoid knowing something of such subjects as you come to me about. Strange, is it not, Mr. Aubyn?"

"It does appear rather strange," he smilingly replied, entering into the spirit of the jest. "But I must leave him to defend himself. He may perhaps be able to do that much—eh, Harcourt?"

Gerard was passing his hand slowly over his moustache, giving her a glance that showed her he accepted the challenge.

"And now I shall be demolished," thought Mabel, "unless I can make a last *coup* and my escape at the same moment."

Mrs. Brandreth looked at the girl in cold surprise. She came to Gerard's rescue with a few words to the effect that people of means and position were not called upon to work in the same way as must those who had their living to get. Nor was it, in her estimation, desirable they should.

"It is the craze just now, I know; but it seems to me more right and proper to keep in one's own sphere, whatever that may be."

Gerard gave her a courteous little bow of appreciation and acknowledgment, as he gently replied:

"Yes; it appears to me a debatable question, that of the rich setting up as workers. It may be all very well when done so as not to compete, nor interfere with, the needs and gains of professional workers. But——"

"Ah, that wretched little 'but'!" thought Mabel; "I may be sure that means mischief."

"Would you approve of ladies with large incomes entering your own profession, for instance, Miss Leith, to the detriment of those depending upon it for a living? Would it not be depriving some real worker of a right?"

"How——"—she had almost added "dare you!"—but recollected in time, and also recollected something else. "Oh you dear Mrs. Raynes! Never again will I think slightingly of you! How grateful I am to you for showing me what I ought to do." Quietly meeting his eyes, she replied: "That would depend a great deal upon how the rich amateur set about it, I think."

"I do not quite see; pray enlighten me, Miss Leith."

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"You seem to require a great deal of enlightening, one way and another, Mr. Harcourt. But I do not mind doing it, so far as it is in my power"—graciously. "I meant there could be no harm in the rich amateur taking the place of the professional worker, if it were only for a time, and he or she arranged to give the weary brain or hands a rest—say in some quiet country home meanwhile—and so enabled them to recruit and recommence with fresh vigour."

Gerard saw at once what had been done, as also did Aubyn, who exclaimed:

"A very good idea, Miss Leith. Both amateur and professional workers would be all the better for such a change in their ordinary lives. A capital idea," he repeated, "and I thank you for it"—his mind at once busily at work as to how best it might be acted upon.

"All very well in theory," put in Mrs. Brandreth; "but not many people of position would, I think, be found able to carry it out. Every rank of life has its duties, which would leave no time for such-masquerading."

Gerard bowed low, looking duly impressed.

"Do you vote with my sister-in-law or Miss Leith, Harcourt?" said Aubyn, to force him, if possible, to speak out. "Which is the best side of the argument?"

Gerard was not to be caught a second time.

"Something must depend upon the fitness of the benevolent substitute, since the employer has also some sort of right in the matter, I suppose."

"Thank you, Mr. Harcourt, certainly they have. We have not too many efficient workers as it is, and I, for my part, should very much prefer engaging one trained and accustomed to do what is undertaken," said Mrs. Brandreth, not without intention.

"Oh!" mentally ejaculated Mabel.

Aubyn had been as quick to see Mrs. Brandreth's meaning, and quietly put in:

"One must suppose at least a moral fitness in the benevolent substitute, and this would have an effect not to be despised."

"I see. You think the benevolent substitutes would at least be able to teach their pupils how to mean well," said Gerard.

"I meant a great deal more than that;" laughed Aubyn. "And I think Miss Leith understands that I did."

"Oh, but Miss Leith is a professional worker, you know; and

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with not very long experience, I think. After twenty years or so——"

"After that time, I dare say I shall be still more inclined to vote for the benevolent substitute," put in Mabel.

"I am extinguished."

"It would take a great deal to extinguish you I think, Mr. Harcourt," moving towards the door.

"Really!" exclaimed Mrs. Brandreth.

"Pardon," said Gerard in a low voice, as he held open the door for Mabel to pass out.

"Granted," she murmured, with a gracious little bend of the head, her eyes mischievously meeting his for a moment, inclined to make the most of her triumph while it lasted.

"Miss Leith takes a great deal upon herself, you see, Mr. Harcourt?" began Mrs. Brandreth, as soon as the door closed. "So very tenacious and ready to take offence, too. She is always treated with the greatest indulgence and consideration here; and yet you see how it is. Governesses seem to be always on the stilts; and one has to be so very careful to avoid offending their pride, or exciting their piques and tempers."

He made no attempt to defend governesses, giving her only a bow for reply; duly impressed, she imagined, with her wisdom and forbearance. How much more evident were her good qualities to him than to Reginald! But then Reginald himself was so different from—so altogether inferior to—his brilliant friend. This was so manifest to her, that she was quite at a loss to understand how it came about that they got on so well as they did together. Their tastes and sentiments seemed so diametrically opposed—no two men could possibly be more unlike, as seen from her point of view—and what was more, they were each very open in giving expression to their different opinions.

It seemed to her that Gerard was rather lax in his views on certain subjects; but this gave no offence to her. Her own beliefs were not strong in anything or anybody; but she would have expected her brother-in-law to be more disturbed by his friend's sceptical speeches than he seemed to be. With her, Reginald had always been so very decided in expressing his disapproval of any slight deviation from what he considered to be right, and she could not understand why he should be different with Mr. Harcourt. Nor would she have been much

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enlightened — incapable as she was of comprehending the characters of the two men—could she have known what passed between them during the hours they spent together about the grounds or in the library.

Their discussions did not lack the charm of variety; being now earnest and thoughtful, when the object of each was simply to get at the true solution of a question; now a keen encounter of wits —rapid passes in which quarter was neither given nor desired. But into one subject Gerard could never succeed in getting Aubyn to enter seriously with him, his frequent challenges notwithstanding. In vain did he endeavour to induce the other to recognize what he pointed out it was his duty to do. In vain did he remind Aubyn of his office and responsibility.

"When you have so fine an opportunity, my dear fellow; the heathen under your very roof! Have I not at least as good a claim upon you as the Griggs? You seem ready to expend any amount of energy upon them; how is it I can't get you to feel your responsibilities in my case?"

Aubyn smiled. "To tell the truth, heathens of your kind do not much interest me, old man."

"Why?"

"You are not half earnest enough, for one thing. I have an old cobbler in Grigg's Court who would beat you out and out in that matter. In fact, he gets so excited in argument as almost to require holding down. I've set my heart upon him; but you—Where would be the credit of proselytizing you."

"Therefore I am to be left out in the cold. I do not quite see where the Christian charity comes in there," said Gerard.

Aubyn laughed outright. "My dear fellow, I am not going to waste my energies upon you. I am reserving them for another field of action."

"But are you not in duty bound to try to——"

"Knock down the obstacles you would put in my way simply for the amusement of seeing them knocked down. A waste of power, if I were inclined to gratify you that way."

"But your cobbler?"

"My cobbler reads only his own side of the arguments, and it is therefore only right to give him the other; but you—— How hard you are at work amongst the mystics, Harcourt! Judging by the gaps on the shelves, one might suppose you are getting up evidence all round. Having a tussle with one of the old Fathers just now, are you not?"

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It was Gerard's turn to laugh, although the colour in his face deepened a little. In carrying off books from the library for private reading in his own room, he had not taken it into account that the gaps on the shelves would tell tales. As the other was well aware, he did not pass an idle half hour when he was alone. Wherever he might happen to be staying, it was understood that Gerard Harcourt liked to spend some hours of the day alone, and only the one or two most intimate with him knew how he was employed, it being his whim to appear an idle man. After a moment or two he lightly replied, "Are you afraid of evidence—is that the reason why you will not meet me on your own ground—eh?"

"There is another, at any rate. I might lose my temper, for instance."

"More than with your cobbler?"

"My dear fellow, a great deal more. I shouldn't be bound to make allowance for you as I must for him, and losing one's temper means——"

"Losing a chance with an adversary?"

"To me, it means something more than that," quietly returned Aubyn.

"How do you manage to pull out a thorn of that kind, Aubyn? It might help one to know the kind of discipline you use with yourself."

"Temper? Oh, well, if you care to know, I have no objection to telling you that much. The process is simple enough—at any rate from an outside point of view. When I get into a rage, I just go for a walk."

"Go for a walk!" repeated Gerard. "A mild sort of remedy that!"

"Not so mild as it appears. I sometimes return so completely fagged and footsore that I can hardly hobble to my room, because—well because I do not turn my face homewards until the reaction has set in. I have to go long distances sometimes, I can tell you."

"What a good old fellow you are!"

"No, thank you. I would rather not, Harcourt," with a quiet smile. "That sort of thing seems to do for my sister-in-law, but it doesn't suit me. She and I are not of the same 'school,' as you are teaching her to call it."

"Ah! that brings us back to the discussion of yesterday."

"My dear Harcourt, I don't mean to be brought back."

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"That seems like an acknowledgment of weakness, does it not—giving up the point?"

"Seem what it may, I give up nothing. You know it, and that is enough for me," hotly.

"Oh, come; if you are inclined for a walk I should like to accompany you."

Aubyn laughed and reddened, and, quick to see the other's meaning, had himself in hand again. In vain did Gerard endeavour to force him to an attack. Aubyn had his reasons for not choosing to be drawn into discussion in certain directions; one being that he knew Harcourt needed no help of his. As to which of the two had most command over himself in argument, there could be no question. Nothing seemed to ruffle Gerard's temper, and it looked as though he enjoyed nothing so much as ruffling that of others.

Meanwhile, the two young men were daily becoming more appreciative of each other. Gerard was ready enough to yield to Aubyn's persuasions in the matter of prolonging his stay at Beechwoods; although, now that the latter's convalescence was established, he more frequently ran up to town, and the two did not see quite so much of each other as before.

Much as she flattered herself he admired her, Mrs. Brandreth saw very little of Gerald Harcourt during his host's absence. He appeared to be overwhelmed with correspondence, or writing work of some kind, which obliged him to keep closely shut up in the library—in fact, as she had once or twice found, when making occasion to go there, locked in. And it generally happened that when she was walking in one direction, he was going in another. Moreover, he always, with one pretext or another, excused himself from accompanying her in her drives; although, with due regard to the proprieties, she always had one of the children with her at such times. She did not suspect that he was acting of set purpose—with the diplomacy a man of the world uses to defend himself from the wiles of a woman of the world.

Upon the few occasions that Gerard met Richard Noel—which generally happened, as he did not fail to notice, when Aubyn was absent—the two did not get beyond the civility of chance acquaintance. Noel did his best to get upon more familiar terms, and was quick-witted and amusing enough to make an idle hour pass pleasantly. But he failed altogether in his estimate of Gerard's character, and could not understand how

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it was that certain subjects, which he expected to be satirized, were treated seriously, and others he thought would be treated seriously, were satirized; or why the pains he took not to differ from, nor cross the other, were so entirely thrown away.

Had he recognized why Gerard sometimes played with a subject, he might also have recognized that it would have been better policy not to laugh with him; just as, had he seen how little Aubyn cared for approbation, he would not have been so laudatory of the schemes for Grigg's Court. Accustomed to appeal to the weaknesses of those he wanted to ingratiate himself with, it did not occur to him that it might not be the way to approach these two. As it was, he could only suppose that with Gerard it was the same as he imagined it was with Aubyn —certain events in the past were remembered against him. In this he wronged them. Both men judged him by what he was then, and would have been ready to take up his cause against the world, had they found him worth defending. In fine, as each was keen enough to detect, he did not ring true.

At his best—when unfettered by motives of what he considered to be policy—Richard Noel did not shine amongst men, nor, to the extent he imagined, amongst women of a higher level than Flora Severn's. He was obliged to be a great deal more on his guard than he cared to be with Mabel. He flattered himself that he was beginning to make his way with her; but it was not without difficulty that he managed to keep up the necessary tone —too highly-pitched and uncompromising for his taste. Not that her conversation was in any degree high-pitched, but that certain subjects, upon which he considered he shone, were shut out. It was simply impossible to pay her the kind of compliments which were acceptable to Flora Severn. Even her beauty was of a slightly too refined order for his taste; although he liked to think it ranked higher in the estimation of others. As a wife, whose wealth and beauty would be the levers to raise him in the world, she would be unexceptionable.

Meanwhile, Mabel was beginning to wish that she did not happen to meet Richard Noel quite so frequently as she now did when walking with the children. Still, under the impression that all he did to help her with them was done simply out of kindness to the governess, she was grateful to him, endeavouring to think that her gratitude was of the same kind as that she felt towards Aubyn. Nevertheless, she knew there was a difference, although she did not as yet perceive in what it consisted. One thing was

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certain, she wished she did not see quite so much of Richard Noel, and this she never felt with regard to Aubyn.

It was through Richard Noel, when he one day joined her and the children in the lower grounds, that Mabel heard there was to be a party at the house that evening.

"I may, therefore, hope for the pleasure of seeing you again to-day, Miss Leith?" he added, throwing as much expression as he dared venture to do into his dark eyes.

"No, I think not, Mr. Noel. Oh! the dinner-party? No, it is not at all likely," she returned, with a better understanding now of what a governess might or might not expect.

"But, indeed, you must not refuse"; wondering meanwhile how he could bring the invitation about without arousing his sister's suspicions.

"It would give me very little pleasure, Mr. Noel," she replied. "I know none of Mrs. Brandreth's friends."

"I hope you will not refuse," he repeated, as they parted.

He might have spared himself the hour's anxious thought afterwards, as to how he could best approach the subject, and compass what he desired with his sister.

"It will be an opportunity for you this evening, Richard, and I hope you will make good use of it," said Mrs. Brandreth, in allusion to his meeting Flora Severn. "I have made the dinner-hour earlier, so that there may be a little dancing afterwards, and Miss Leith can play to us," smiling pleasantly to herself with the reflection that the handsome Mr. Harcourt would be bound to engage his hostess for the first dance, at least. There was, too, the arrival in good time of a box from town containing a wonderful evening gown, upon which Madame Michaud had been begged to concentrate her best powers. If the event was to seem almost impromptu to her friends, it had been carefully thought out and prepared for by herself.

Noel's mind was set at rest; Miss Leith would be present.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"THE SHAME OF IT!"

It was understood that Mrs. Brandreth was free to play the mistress of Beechwoods in the matter of dispensing hospitalities to the neighbours. It had generally happened that Aubyn found his presence was required elsewhere at such times, and this had

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been borne philosophically enough. If he was aware how little he was missed, he was in no way offended thereat. It appeared indeed as though he lent himself to the furtherance of her wishes in the way of absenting himself just at the right moment.

When she mentioned that she supposed it would be necessary to ask the Hursts, Severns, and one or two others for a quiet evening—"Just a friendly little gathering, you know, Reginald;" he had acquiesced readily enough, merely adding: "You will ask Miss Leith, of course, Agatha." She did not at all see why it should be a matter of course that the governess should be included; but, as she had her own reason for requiring Mabel's presence, she did not argue the point with him, pleasantly replying:

"Oh, yes!"

The intimation that she was expected in the drawing-room after dinner was conveyed to Mabel at the last possible moment; and it was made sufficiently plain why she was invited. It was not until the children's bed time—nearly eight o'clock—that she was informed that her services at the piano would be required. She had comfortably ensconced herself in her favourite seat with a book, when Soames brought the message, in a pleasantly modified form, and offered to assist Miss Leith in dressing. Mabel gladly accepted; and remembering that one of her trunks contained evening dress, it was brought in and unpacked by the astonished Soames.

"This would be the right kind of thing, I suppose," said Mabel, indicating a gown of white silk. It looked plain enough, so far as the fashion of it went; but, to indemnify herself for making a gown of such extreme plainness, the modiste had used the richest and thickest of silks to be had; which, with the fine old Flemish lace, put so lavishly about the neck and sleeves, would tell tales to experienced eyes. Mabel put nothing in her hair, and wore no ornament nor scrap of colour, save two or three crimson roses among the lace at her neck, and a fan to match.

Soames had brought with her a large bouquet of Mabel's favourite roses, which she explained had been given her by Mr. Harcourt's man, with his master's compliments, for Miss Leith, adding, with a meaning look, that she thought Wright had been sent to town expressly for them.

A hot flush rose to Mabel's brow, and she lifted her hand to remove the roses; but, after a moment's thought, let them

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remain, telling herself that it was only coward conscience that made her afraid. It was quite natural he should send a few flowers to Dorothy's sister; and, as for sending for them, Wright might have had other commissions to execute in town, although he had said nothing about them to Soames.

"Shall I do, Soames?" she asked, as the other put the remaining flowers into a dainty holder. "It is only a small affair, I suppose, and I ought not to be much dressed."

"Do!" ejaculated Soames, gazing at her in unfeigned admiration, and not a little astonishment. To look like that after so simple a process, hurried through in a few minutes! Soames' thoughts reverted to the elaborate preparation gone through in another room of the house earlier in the evening, and wondered how the two women would look standing together.

Mrs. Brandreth had been speculating a little curiously as to what sort of appearance the governess would make after half an hour's notice. The moment her eyes fell upon Mabel, she saw that her own toilet suggested in comparison only elaborate millinery, while Miss Severn's pretty tulle, with its daisies and dew-drops, intended to be so effusively simple, was a failure.

As Mabel passed with easy unconscious grace across the room towards Mrs. Brandreth, one there would have recognized her as the Miss Leith she had met during the season, but that she was very near-sighted, and did not like to use glasses.

"The governess? I thought it was Miss Leith!" said Mrs. Chatteris, peering after Mabel.

"She is Miss Leith; and she is the governess," returned Mrs. Severn.

"Then she cannot be the Miss Leith I mean," thought Mrs. Chatteris, and supposing she had made another of her mistakes, she said no more.

Pausing a moment on her way to exchange a pleasant greeting with the Rector's good-natured little sister, always inclined to be friendly to the beautiful young governess, and lost in admiration now, Mabel presently reached Mrs. Brandreth's side.

"You want me to play, do you not, Mrs. Brandreth?"

"Yes, when we are ready," coldly returned the other; adding, "You were quite prepared for the occasion, it appears."

"No," replied Mabel, not suspecting that Mrs. Brandreth was alluding to what she wore. "I had your message only just now; but it does not take long to dress;" adding pleasantly, "Tell me

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when you are ready; and please to remember that I can manage round dances better than square ones. I could not, I think, recollect the whole of a set," unable to divest her mind of the idea that she was conferring a favour by playing anything.

"I must ask you to practise for next time," a little sharply.

"You must give me longer notice, then," smilingly replied unconscious Mabel, turning to say a few words to Gerard, who had made his way to her side, and thinking how pleasant it was to be in a drawing-room with grown-up people once more.

As she stood with her shapely head drawn slightly back, slim, *élancée*, radiantly beautiful, roses in one hand, and the other hanging by her side, idly swaying to and fro the crimson feather fan, all eyes were drawn to her, and not a few appreciated the picture.

"Where did she get all those roses? Jennings told me the best had gone off," thought Mrs. Brandreth, her brows contracting as she sharply said, "We will begin with a waltz, Miss Leith."

"Very well," returned Mabel, with a little nod, talking on with Gerard, as she moved slowly towards the piano.

He had been quietly enjoying the scene. How impossible it was for any shafts Mrs. Brandreth could aim to touch her! How grandly she shone amongst other women in her careless independence and lack of desire to shine! Not one in the room was, in his sight, worthy to be her handmaiden! He was for the moment a little off his guard, and there was an expression in his eyes which told something to one or two lookers-on, as he went with her towards the piano.

Miss Hurst, a pretty, dark-eyed girl, not accustomed to be outshone, was quite ready to agree with Miss Severn in her assertion that Mrs. Brandreth was really too forbearing in allowing the governess to make herself so prominent. "The idea of her assuming such airs, and taking up Mr. Harcourt's attention in that way, talking and smiling as familiarly as though they were old friends!"

Mabel had, in fact, for the moment entirely forgotten her surroundings, and the *rôle* she was playing, as she thanked him for the roses, and gave him a message she had that morning received from Dorothy.

He was reminded of his duty by his hostess, and endeavoured to appear sufficiently appreciative of his good fortune in being allowed the first dance, as he turned away with her. His place

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at the piano was very quickly taken. Two or three of the most eligible men in the room stationed themselves there, ready to turn over the music, and contend for the honour of holding Mabel's fan or gloves. To Mrs. Hurst's consternation, her only son, just home from Oxford, and, she told herself, quite unaccustomed to the wiles of girls on the look-out for a good match, had not taken his eyes from the governess since the first moment she had entered the room. In vain did the anxious mother call him aside, and remind him that he was bound in common courtesy to dance with some of the young girls present. Impatiently protesting that he hated dancing, and couldn't dance, he walked off to station himself at the piano again, not any the more filially disposed for finding that, in the meantime, his place had been filled up. Others had secured the privilege of waiting upon Mabel, and there was nothing left for him but to gaze at her.

Mabel accepted the little attentions she received all the more graciously as being offered to the governess; although not one there could flatter himself that he had more encouragement than another. Richard Noel had not as yet dared to approach the charmed circle, but had had time during his duty dance with Flora Severn to take some note of what was going on at the piano. He found consolation in the thought of a little plan he had arranged in his own mind. His own turn was coming.

Mabel rattled away cheerfully enough for a while; but after two or three dances had been got through, her attention began to flag, and she found the unaccustomed work wearisome. It was not, perhaps, endured any the more patiently for a chance word or two that reached her respecting Mr. Harcourt's devotion to the widow. "Why does he go on in that way, pretending what he does not mean?" she thought angrily. "It is wrong to Mrs. Brandreth, and still more so to Dorrie! What is his love worth, if it is to have no better effect upon him than this! Could it be that—— No!" She hurriedly put the thought away from her. It was only his way of amusing himself, forgetting that he ought not to do that at another's expense. Gerard must be what she believed him. "He *must* be!" But she was irritated, and beginning to be a little curt with her attendant knights, as tired of them and their attentions as she was of the "strumming," and responded to Mrs. Brandreth's "A little quicker, please, Miss Leith," in a way that very soon put the last two or three couples *hors de combat*.

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It was Richard Noel's opportunity. After endeavouring to keep Mabel's ten-miles-an-hour pace, both his sister and Flora Severn were fain to go with their partners in search of refreshment. He whispered a word to the good-natured Miss Grantham. She at once took the hint, and, going to Mabel's side, offered to give her a rest by playing a dance or two. It appeared to come about naturally enough, as did Noel's suggestion that Miss Leith would find it very delightful on the terrace, if she were inclined to go there for a little fresh air before supper. The night was warm, but if she were afraid of taking a chill, he would get her a wrap.

"The terrace! Yes; that is just what I should like," returned unsuspecting Mabel, at once taking his offered arm; adding, that she was not in the least afraid of a chill.

"I fear you have found the dance-playing monotonous, Miss Leith," softly began Noel, as soon as they had reached the terrace.

"Yes, it is wearisome to keep on at. This is better, certainly."

A still, hot night; the undulating park, old elms, and glimpses of the sea beyond, tinged with the soft, full radiance of the harvest moon. Mabel stood silently gazing at the scene, her elbow on the balustrade of the terrace, and her chin in her hand.

Richard Noel's pulses throbbed a little wildly. He was about to put fortune to the test; and, at that moment, it was not her money he was thinking of—or, at any rate, not only that. He was sufficiently in love to satisfy his own conscience. He was reminding himself of the necessity for caution. This was not the kind of girl to whom he could talk even as he did to Flora Severn. But there was a very lover-like expression in his dark eyes, and a tender ring in his voice, as he began with some reference to the beauty of the night—the effect of the moonlight upon the scene that lay before them; partly in a glamour of silvery radiance, partly in dim mysterious shadow.

"Shadow," she absently repeated. "Yes; one feels more in accord with the shadow than the light sometimes."

"What can shadows suggest to one who dwells always in—in the light?" he said a little awkwardly, striving to rise to what he took to be her level of sentiment.

"But I don't always dwell in it," with a half-smile, still too much absorbed in her own thoughts to take heed of his tone and looks. "'Sweetness and light' are only an occasional experience to most of us, I fear."

He was longing, yet half fearing, to give words to the appeal

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that rose to his lips, when she gathered back her thoughts and went on—

"Do not stay, Mr. Noel. They are dancing again, and I prefer remaining here a little longer."

"Do not send me away, Miss Leith—pray do not, when—when——"

She knew the tone—all too well—and drew back, a troubled look gathering in her eyes. What she had feared was true, then. But, telling herself that he must not be left in doubt, she put in with quiet decision: "I prefer being alone, Mr. Noel."

"Ah, let me speak, and forgive me if I am not able to do so in measured tones. How could I, when the mere hope of gaining your love would be the saving of my soul?" With the thought that the knowledge of certain facts must come to her sooner or later, and that the idea of having the power to reform him might have its attractions for a romantic girl, he hurriedly added: "My life has not been always what it should have been"—feeling that the admission was in itself a virtue which ought to raise him in her eyes—"but——"

"Do not go on, Mr. Noel, I beg of you. I am so sorry; so very sorry!"

"Do not reject me on the impulse of the moment," he urged. "I do not hope to be able to gain your love at once; only let me strive to win."

She sighed, more really touched and sorry for him than she had been for any of her quondam lovers. She imagined he was the first man who had loved her for herself, and she could not find it in her heart to give him his dismissal too roughly.

"Let me but strive to win," he eagerly repeated, taking note of her troubled softened look. "Give me but the faintest shadow of a chance. Let me try to earn the right to work for you, and I will soon prove what I can do." At that moment he really believed he would have been ready to work for her had it been necessary so to do. "I know that I am not worthy of you; no man could be, but my love is at least sincere. Do not scorn it."

"Do you think I could scorn anything real and true, Mr. Noel? I am so sorry, because I am obliged to speak very plainly. In justice to you, I must." Feeling that so much was perhaps due to him, she added, in a low, hesitating voice, the

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colour rushing to her cheeks, "I—in truth, I have no love to give any one—now."

"Some one else!" he ejaculated, realizing that there was indeed no chance for him; and his face falling with a sudden remembrance now, that in losing her he lost her fortune. This last was a disappointment quite keen enough to impart to him a sufficiently woe-begone air, as he stood before her with clasped hands, and down-bent head.

Eyes less keen than those looking on might have divined something of what had taken place between the two, and Gerard understood at once. He had just emerged from one of the open windows of the drawing-room; and, although the sounds from within prevented his hearing what was said, he could see plainly enough. He paused for a moment, then came slowly forward.

"Miss Severn has promised you the waltz just beginning, she says, Mr. Noel," always punctilious in using the prefix to the other's name.

"Thanks. Oh yes," turning to re-enter by the window.

As soon as they were alone, Gerard began with elaborate deference: "Pray pardon me, I was obliged to do Miss Severn's bidding."

"What is there to pardon?" she asked shortly; her pride in arms at his tone. She knew him too well to mistake the meaning of his politeness. "Do you mean that I ought not to have been talking out here with Mr. Noel?"

"I thought you might not know what he is. Men of his stamp are apt to make too much of a *tête-à-tête*. You would not like to give him the opportunity for assuming that he had been in any way encouraged."

"I am not in the least afraid that Mr. Noel will misunderstand me, Gerard."

"Why are you so ready to defend him, Mabel?"

"Perhaps because you are so ready to attack."

He smiled, thinking that quite possible. In any case, he knew that Richard Noel had no real cause for triumph. He made the *amende*, and they were presently talking in the old way again.

"Am I not getting on grandly, Gerard? I am beginning to think myself quite a model governess."

"I should not be surprised to hear you had received your dismissal to-morrow."

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"Dismissal! Oh, Gerard; why—what have I done?"

"I am afraid you have not shown sufficient reverence for your betters; and, what is worse—" pausing, and gazing at her with smiling eyes.

"Well, what is worse?"

"Ask your dressing-glass."

She was silent; the colour dying out of her cheeks, and her eyes gravely downcast. That was the way he talked to Mrs. Brandreth. After a moment, she said, with a little break in her voice: "You, at least, might know how much I dislike compliments of that kind, Gerard—if they can be called compliments."

"And I do not care to offer you any, certainly not to-night," reverently lifting her hand to his lips, as with deep earnestness he went on, "to-night, when my life seems too poor an offering."

"Your life! I—I do not understand;" her heart beating heavily, with a sudden fear.

"Is not my love my life? Don't you know, Mabel?"

She dragged her hand from his; gazing at him wide-eyed and bewildered. The name of Dorothy trembled on her lips, but was withheld as too sacred to be spoken at such a moment. Then, white and trembling, she ejaculated, in a broken voice: "Oh, what have I done to lead you to think you might talk in that way to me?"

To his dying day, Gerard Harcourt would never forget the expression of dismay—not to say repulsion—in her face. He fell back, his eyes fastened upon her, as she stood with bowed head, twisting her hands together, in a mute misery of shame.

"Do you mean—do you then wish me to understand—?" he began, in a low faltering tone.

"Oh, Gerard! You! When I hoped you were—when you ought to be as a brother to me!"

"My mistake has been great indeed!" He stood gazing at her for a few moments, as one in a dream; then turned, and swaying, and stumbling like a drunken man, went down the terrace steps, and passed out of sight, into the dim shadows of the trees beyond.

She yielded to an outburst of tears and sobs. "I have allowed him to see into my heart. But your mistake is great indeed if you think my love for you has made me as untrue to her as you are, Gerard. Thank God, I am not! Weak, and stupid, and

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mad, but not untrue! I shall know that, though he does not, Dorrie. For him, I will care no more, even as a sister—I will not!" Roughly brushing away her tears, she stood sternly gazing out into the night, looking as though she were indeed capable of tearing her love from her heart, and killing it with her scorn. Then she was again bowed down in bitterest shame and misery. What would life be now that she was no longer able to believe in Gerard? Having to give him up seemed as nothing in comparison with having to give up her faith in him! How would she be able to keep up the semblance of sisterly feeling towards him; knowing all the while, he had been unfaithful to her Dorrie? How would she be able to go through the ordeal of constantly meeting him? She had believed that his cynicism was, as he had once said it was, for the "well-meaning that comes to nothing, and the enthusiasm that does not stand wear and tear." What was he now? How much better to have felt that she fell short of his standard, than to know that he himself had lowered it! Hitherto she had been able to think that however different he might pretend to be, he was really unchanged—the same Gerard, true, noble, full of high aspirations, who had won her girlish admiration. Now! What was the man who could make love to both sisters at once?

"Ah, Gerard, if it were only that you were dead! The shame of it! The shame of it!" covering her face with her trembling hands.

"Miss Leith!"

Some one was calling her! She turned, and fled with swift feet along the terrace, and into the house by a side entrance, whence she made her way unobserved up to her own room; and locking the door, threw herself on to the bed, in utter abandonment of shame and misery.

CHAPTER XIX.

"PECCAVI!"

The sun had been shining a couple of hours when Mabel awoke from the deep sleep into which, towards morning, she had fallen from sheer mental exhaustion. Realizing the necessities of every-day life, she rose, changed her dress, and did her best to make herself look as usual to the sharp little eyes which she knew would be so ready to note the slightest change in her.

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In her consciousness, she shrank painfully from meeting even the children. How would she be able to keep up appearances with their elders? she asked herself. There was the bitter thought that, if she were able to do so—if she could conceal the knowledge of what had passed from all the world besides—Gerard would always know that it had been possible to make love speeches to Dorothy's sister. That he had been repulsed was not enough. It ought never to have happened, she said to herself. She must have been to blame—she must! There was at the same time an undercurrent of pity for him in her mind. With the remembrance of the misery in his eyes, as he had turned that last look towards her, and in spite of her attempts to force her thoughts away, her heart still went out to him; and this all the more because she did not exonerate herself. Where was he? Had he gone back to town? What had become of him? She could ask no questions, shrinking painfully from the mention of his name, although Soames looked as if she would be very ready to talk.

It was only by a chance word that Mabel heard Gerard was still in the house. It would be doubly hard for her if he remained there—he ought not to remain—and yet it would be worse for her to go herself. She dared not trust herself to give up the governessing and return home now, until she had in some measure recovered the shock she had received, and was more prepared to meet her sister. How would she be able to meet Dorrie? The very thought caused her face to whiten. No! terribly irksome as the work had become, she must keep on now. It was the price she must pay for her mistake in leaving home.

She was looking quite ill enough to warrant the message she sent by the school-room maid to Mrs. Brandreth, to the effect that she had not been well the night before, and was consequently obliged to go to her room. As it happened, such of the guests as were not going to stay the night at Beechwoods had taken their departure shortly after Mabel's disappearance; and her services being no longer required, Mrs. Brandreth could very well dispense with her presence.

This morning the children seemed more than usually obtuse over their lessons. "Jest is not spelled with a G, Mima."

"I'm sure there isn't another letter that would do as well," murmured rebellious Mima.

"Look out the word."

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Mima pulled the dictionary towards her, with an angry jerk.

"If I might put down twelve sevens, and add them up!" said despairing Algy.

"What is tribute money, if you please, Miss Leith?" asked Sissy.

Never had Mabel found them so troublesome and slow of comprehension. She was once more insisting upon twelve times seven, when Aubyn, who had come down by the early morning train to settle some business with the land steward, about which had arisen a sudden complication, entered the room.

"My sister-in-law is getting up an impromptu picnic for to-day, and hopes you will join the party; with the children, if you think they deserve a holiday, Miss Leith."

Mrs. Brandreth's hopes had not been very effusively expressed. Indeed, but for his opportune arrival at the moment, and suggestion of it, she would have had no thought of sending Mabel an invitation.

"What do you say, Mima; and you, Algy?" with the suspicion, after a glance at their downcast faces, that the last clause in his sentence had, in some way, touched their consciences. "Do you think you deserve a holiday?"

"I worried Miss Leith with questions when she was engaged," put in kindly Sissy, coming to the rescue of the others. "And I think she is not quite well."

"We didn't know that, did we, Algy?" hurriedly said Mima, while Algy opined that a picnic would make them *quite* good.

"Run and ask Soames to dress you," said Mabel, not finding it in her heart to deprive them of a pleasure, much as she would have preferred remaining where she was.

"I fear they have been more troublesome than usual," said Aubyn, lingering a few moments after the children had raced away in high glee, looking a little anxiously at Mabel as he spoke. Although he did not now approach the ground marked dangerous with her, he was none the less interested in everything that concerned her.

Her eyes fell, and her fingers trembled about the books she was gathering up, as she murmured something about a headache, and being herself most to blame for the children's shortcomings.

The look of anxiety deepened in his face; but he replied in a

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cheerful tone: "We cannot afford to let you have headaches. It will do you all good to have a day's play, I think. They are going to drive to the Weir woods, nine or ten miles from here, and some people are to meet them there. I should like to join you, but I have two or three hours' hard work over some accounts with Grant before I return to town, where I am due to-night at a meeting. I will give Harcourt a hint to do what he can to help you with the children."

"No," she hurriedly put in; adding, as the colour rushed to her cheeks, then almost as suddenly deserted them again, leaving her whiter than before, "please do not—I prefer having them to myself—that is, I—I think I can manage them better alone."

"Very well. As you please, of course," he replied, in a quiet matter-of-fact tone, as though not noticing her agitation. But there was a very grave expression in his eyes as he bade her good-bye, and quitted the room.

Gerard was to be there, then! He had not, as she had hoped, left the place! She was too much absorbed in the thought that he was going to be present, and in endeavouring to prepare herself to meet him without attracting the notice of others, to give any heed to her appearance. Hurriedly putting on a hat, and throwing a wrap over one shoulder, she descended with the children to the hall, where she stood white and still, waiting until their places should be assigned to them in one of the carriages.

When presently Mrs. Brandreth came into her vicinity, Mabel, feeling that something more than the message she had sent might be expected of her, again apologised for her abrupt disappearance the night before.

"It would have been better to let me know you were going; that is all, Miss Leith."

"Yes, certainly it would, but—I was so tired of it; and—" recollecting again, she a little confusedly added: "That is, I had not been accustomed to play so long, and——" At that moment her eyes met Gerard's, grave and troubled, bent upon her, and her words trailed off into silence.

But Mrs. Brandreth's attention was turned in another direction. She had heard the apology, and considering it sufficient under the circumstances, did not take the trouble to listen to explanations, turning away without noticing Mabel's pallor and the sudden break in her voice.

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With his sister and Flora Severn present, Noel could not venture to approach Mabel; but he contrived to meet her eyes once or twice with a sorrowful disconsolate expression in his own, which he hoped would not be without its effect upon her. He had arrived at the unsatisfactory conclusion that of winning her heart there was no chance. But he had been quick to notice that he had succeeded in another way—she had evidently been touched by his unselfish love for the governess. If he had not won her love, he had won her sympathy; and his mind was at work as to the use that might be made of the friendship of a romantic girl of eighteen, with a great deal of money at her command; although he was beginning to recognize that her romance was not so entirely unaccompanied by common sense, as he had imagined it must be. She had shown a great deal of interest in what he termed his work, and something surely might be made of this. The loan of even a few hundreds would be the saving of him just then, he said to himself; preferring to use the word "loan" to "gift," even in his thoughts. Yes; he must talk about sudden losses, and consequent difficulties, and that sort of thing. If this were not sufficient to induce her to take him into her confidence as to her power to help him, involving, as it would, an acknowledgment of her real position, he must afterwards appear to discover that she was the rich Miss Leith, and draw back with the reticence and pride of a poor man, which seemed to take with her.

As for the rest, he must content himself with what was within his reach, the "bird in the hand," as Agatha termed it. The husband of Flora would at any rate have a roof over his head, food to eat, and clothes to wear. Moreover, he was not obliged to keep his mind on the stretch to come up to her ideal, as he was with the other. With the hope of winning a richer prize, he had been somewhat neglectful of, and less ardent in his tone towards Flora of late; but he had not the slightest misgiving as to his finding it easy enough to recover his position, whenever he might choose to do so. He would begin to make up for lost time at once. There would be opportunity enough, and to spare, at the picnic.

The relations between his sister and himself had become somewhat strained of late, and there was no exchanging confidences with her. She adopted a rather sharp tone with him; and, what was worse, offended his *amour propre* by supposing that he might not succeed in winning Flora Severn.

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During a short *tête-à-tête* with him before breakfast, she had reminded him in a few angry words that he had been very lax in his attentions to Flora Severn the night before, and that she was beginning to endure his defection very cheerfully. "Remember, it may be a last opportunity to-day, Richard, and if you neglect your chance I can do no more for you." All of which had the effect of rendering him more irritated with her. Smarting under the consciousness of his failure with Mabel, he was the more ready to resent its being supposed that he could not succeed even with Flora Severn.

The carriages had been brought round, and there was some little laughing discussion as to who was to go with whom. Mabel did not venture a second glance towards Gerard, waiting, to outward seeming, quietly and calmly with the children until places should be assigned them. After all the others had been provided for, Mrs. Brandreth found that there was only the village cart left for herself and a groom; whereat, when it at length penetrated his mind, Gerard found himself in duty bound to offer to drive her, and, after a little graceful hesitation, his services were smilingly accepted.

Gerard first assisted Mabel and the children into the waggonette, but no word was exchanged between them. There was merely a lifting of the hat from him, and an inclination of the head in acknowledgment from her. Afterwards he took his place by Mrs. Brandreth's side, and the procession, as the children delightedly called it, moved on.

"He too has gone through something," thought Mabel, after a momentary glance at him. "He is not so lost to the sense of what is right as to feel no self-reproach." In fact, there were, to those who could see, signs in his face of his having passed through a severe mental struggle. He could set his lips in the form he chose them to take, and keep all expression out of his eyes, but he could not change the ashen hue of his face, and the drawn, haggard look that comes of a night's misery such as he had passed through. Only Wright knew that his master had spent the night in the woods, and re-entered the house when the servants were beginning their morning's work. The attention of more than one had been drawn to him as the morning wore on; and even Mrs. Brandreth presently began to feel a little at a loss how to account for it. But it was not easy to question Gerard Harcourt when he did not choose to be questioned.

Mabel made her "headache" account, so far as it might, for her

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depression and taciturnity with the children, and her temples were indeed throbbing painfully. They missed so much her readiness to enjoy with them, her buoyant spirits, quaint little speeches, and appeals to their imaginations, and were telling each other in whispers how much difference it made when Miss Leith's head ached. But the delightful fact remained—they were going to a picnic for the first time, and they could not altogether refrain from questioning as well as speculating about the new pleasure.

"Going to have dinner on the grass and sit upon nothing!" enthusiastically ejaculated Algy.

"And have all sorts of goodies, like being at a party," said Mima. "Afterwards—— What comes afterwards, Miss Leith, dear?"

"Afterwards? Oh, anything you like to do—games of play, or exploring."

"Exploring?"—dubiously.

"Finding out for yourselves the prettiest spots about the place," explained Mabel, making an effort to get away from her own thoughts and enter into theirs. "And there will probably be tea, the water boiled over sticks, which you may help to gather."

"Like real gipsies!"—in high delight.

And leaving their governess to her own reflections again, they whispered confidences to each other as to how they might help to carry out the illusion, by making their hands and faces dirty, tearing rents in their clothes, and contriving to lose their shoes.

The carriages drew up at a turning in the road, where they alighted to walk through a narrow, shady lane in the wood, leading down to the water's edge, a winding river, with here and there a rather deep fall. Gerard once more motioned the groom aside, and himself assisted Mabel and the children to alight. But again no word was spoken, and her one hurried glance towards him showed her that his eyes were downcast, and his lips tightly compressed. As soon as they had alighted, he turned away and joined the others again. Following the rest, increased in number now by four or five who had been waiting for them at the turning, Mabel and her charges walked along the lane, and down the winding path, through shady woods, towards the river. A picturesque, thoroughly English scene; the water leaping down the weir, dancing and sparkling in the sunshine, as it rushed on

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again amongst the white stones in its shallow bed; the rising woodlands on either side, well-shaded turfy nooks and hollows and walks diverging in all directions over the brow of the hill and along the river side; all combining to render it as fitting a spot as could be chosen for a picnic.

Two or three couples were at once seized with a desire to explore, and were soon lost to sight, their whereabouts now and again indicated by the sweet low laugh of a girl, or the deeper, fuller tones of her companion. Richard Noel stood for a few moments in uncertainty, his eyes following Mabel and the children making their way down towards the river, and once more argued the point with himself as to whether or not he should hazard one more throw for fortune. But he again came to the conclusion that the risk of losing both would be too great, and slowly turned away to go in search of Flora Severn. "It would be easy enough with her," he said to himself. He had only to begin again where he had left off. Moreover, she was not entirely without charm for him. She had, for example, a pretty way of showing her appreciation of his wit and wisdom which was altogether lacking in Mabel. To his surprise and chagrin, he was made to understand that, for the moment at any rate, Flora was able to exist without him.

His late defection, more evident than he imagined, had in fact been another's opportunity. Taking less pains to attract, while secretly encouraging Noel, Flora had appeared to much greater advantage than usual in Wreybourne society, and the owner of a large estate in the county had of late shown an inclination to declare himself. Half reluctant to give up the one bit of romance in her life, she had not met her new admirer's advances very cordially, until she began to feel piqued at Richard Noel's growing coldness. In contrast with this, Mr. Maitland's attentions were now the more welcome, to say nothing of her appreciation of his wealth and influence in the county. He was, to be sure, some years older, and far from being as handsome as the younger man, but she was beginning to recognize that he was a much more desirable *parti*. Moreover, Mr. Maitland had her mother's cordial approval, which Noel had not.

When the picnic was proposed at the breakfast-table, Mrs. Severn had mentioned that the Weir woods were a pleasant drive from the Maitlands' place, and that the brother and sister would, she knew, like to join the party, if Mrs. Brandreth's arrangements permitted, and she was so very kind as to invite

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them, and a telegram reached them in time. Mrs. Brandreth saw no objection, and pleasantly acquiesced; offering to at once send a man to the railway station with the telegram, little suspecting that she was, so to speak, thus putting a seal to her brother's dismissal by Flora.

Noel was quick to recognize that it was not by chance he was left to do the honours of the place to the elderly Miss Maitland, whilst Flora walked serenely off with the brother.

But if Miss Maitland was elderly, she did not feel so. An energetic little woman, with an insatiable thirst for information about any and everything, and not at all above asking questions, or availing herself of any assistance she could get. Pleasantly accepting his not very readily offered services, she at once set off on an exploring expedition, smilingly informing him that he would have plenty to do. She combined business with pleasure, the search of the picturesque with the search for her favourite ferns and mosses and what not, which it was her cavalier's privilege to carry about in a primitive-looking hand-basket. Trotting briskly about, feeling sure there were undiscovered wonders to be found, now in one direction and now in another, chatting meanwhile in a way that obliged him to keep his wits at work to avoid appearing utterly imbecile, Miss Maitland thoroughly enjoyed her hour's exercise, and did not see why he should not do the same.

"I am not young and attractive, to be sure—love-making is out of the question, but young men cannot be always love-making, and I am doing my best to amuse and interest him," thought the little lady.

The children were watching the waterfall and speculating as to why it came over so smoothly at the top and tumbled about so roughly at the bottom, and Mabel standing by, absorbed in reflection, when she heard Gerard's voice.

"Will you give me a few moments, Mabel?" he asked in a low, grave tone.

She turned her eyes to meet his, and shrinking nervously from the ordeal, faltered out—

"Is it necessary?"

"Yes."

Telling Sissy to take care of Algy and Mima, she walked a short distance along the bank, then stood still, waiting in troubled silence for what was to come.

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He had been quick to note her first hesitation, the look of fear that came into her eyes; and the strained expression about his mouth grew more marked.

"You are not afraid, Mabel? You do not think it possible I could desire to pain you—again? I only want to ask you to forget what passed last night. How can we two cease to be friends through one mad speech? Your tone—your whole manner—showed me that I must have been mad."

The violet eyes, dim with tears, were turned to meet his, as, in her desire to spare him, she hurriedly put in, in a low, broken voice—

"Ah, do not go on! You would not have talked in—in that way unless I had given you cause to think you might. It is I that was to blame—it is for me to ask pardon, Gerard."

"You! No; you must not blame yourself in any way. It was my own mad folly. Idiot that I was! Will you try to forget, Mabel?"

"Yes," putting out her hand to him. "We must both try to do that—only"—breaking down for a moment again, as she added, "But how can I forgive myself for having seemed to—to—care for you in that way. Ah, Gerard, you must have fancied I did!"

"I see where I was wrong," a little bitterly. "That was made sufficiently evident to me last night. But let all that be considered past and over; and I give you my word of honour you shall not be wounded in the same way again. We are friends, eh, Mabel?"

"Yes, we must be;" mentally adding, with a little half sob, "for her sake."

"Last night I meant to get away from this place at once—before people were about in the morning; but I could not leave you so, and I do not know how to get out of my promise to Aubyn without bringing upon myself all sorts of questioning. I must stay a few days, if you do not mind."

"Oh, no; pray do not go before you intended. Do nothing that might attract attention. It would only make things worse for me than they are."

"I want to make things better for you. Do not be troubled about me. I know you are sorry. And, as for yourself, how can you be to blame?"

She shook her head. Endeavour as he might to spare her, she blamed herself far more than she blamed him. They had both

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been in the wrong, but she the most. It ought not to have been possible!

The children came running towards them; Algy in great excitement about having seen a large fish leap out of the water as it rushed down its stony bed.

"We are friends?" repeated Gerard, in a pleading tone.

"Yes," nervously, "so long as we are both true to——" She hesitated, and the impatient children gave her no time to finish the sentence, catching her hands, and begging her to make haste, or she would be too late to see the fish.

They were separated; he to be pressed into Mrs. Brandreth's service, and she to be dragged down to the water's edge, to watch for the fish which Algy felt sure could not be far off.

"Friends," she was thinking. "Yes; Dorrie's husband and sister must be friends."

But the children did not allow her time for reflection; plying her with eager questions about everything that excited their wonder or curiosity; making plaintive inquiries, between times, as to when luncheon would be ready. When, at length, the summons came, Mrs. Brandreth made it sufficiently apparent that she considered the governess's duties ought to absorb all her attention. To be ignored was no annoyance to Mabel. She was, just then, only too desirous to escape notice as much as possible. Being bored by the children was easier to bear than having to talk to their elders.

Gerard was in the place of honour by Mrs. Brandreth, with the privilege of being allowed to assist her in dispensing the hospitalities, which for the moment, at least, kept him too much occupied to allow his attention to wander. She found it very delightful thus to be showing her friends what she chose to call his devotion, and she was prepared to make the most of the occasion. But she was very quickly made to recognize that there were limits to his obedience. The ease with which, the moment he chose to do so, he broke the net which she imagined was so securely woven about him, might have seemed ominous to one with less self-confidence. Whatever he chose to do, he did; and this with a cool indifference to opinion not very flattering to her.

It was not very agreeable to Mrs. Brandreth to see him carry off the lobster mayonnaise, of which there was not a too large supply, to the governess, although she was afraid of attempting to prevent him. He really seemed so obtuse in some respects

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that he might be capable of asking her, before people, if she did not wish Miss Leith to have any. She must wait until everything was secure before attempting to use her influence in that way.

"You like this, I think?" he was saying, as he offered the mayonnaise to Mabel.

"Thank you, Gerard," trying to look and speak as a sister should.

"How desirous he is to be friends again!" thought Mabel. "No, it will not happen again. It must have been a momentary madness, as he called it. It is not so bad as I thought. Once back with Dorrie, and it will all be forgotten like a miserable dream. He will be himself again, and I——" she broke off with a little sigh. What did it matter about her?

But one sitting near had heard the low spoken "Gerard," and seen the expression in her eyes and the blush rise in her cheeks. To Richard Noel it was a revelation. Gerard Harcourt was the man who had stood in his way, then; it was to him she had alluded the night before. Gerard Harcourt, who had only half an hour ago contrived, on their way through the woods, to give Noel a hint that he knew he had been making inquiries as to Miss Leith and the amount of her fortune, and more than a hint as to what he suspected was his motive for so doing. No; he was quick to recognize that any hopes he had formed with regard to Miss Leith's money were rendered as futile as were those with regard to herself. Harcourt had constituted himself her guardian; and with such a guardian he did not care to cross swords.

In her pride and gratification Mrs. Severn had not been able to abstain from giving her "dear friend" a hint of her daughter's bright prospects; and just before luncheon his sister had spoken a few sharp words to Noel, informing him that what she had warned him of had come to pass, and taunting him with not having had the power to win Flora Severn. This blow to his self-love, coupled with the consciousness of having failed with Mabel, he found it difficult enough to bear without the additional sting which came with the discovery that his successful rival was no other than Gerard Harcourt—the man who had always kept him at arm's length, and whose quiet satire he had occasionally winced under. But once in possession of the facts, he was armed, he told himself. He would at least be able to make them recognize he was not an enemy so mean that he could not strike a blow in his own defence! To begin with, he

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would be able to show his sister, who, in the first elation of her hopes respecting Harcourt, had not been able to avoid talking to her brother of the bright prospect opening out to her, that she too had been premature in her conclusions respecting her own powers to win. The admirer she so much prided herself upon was the accepted lover of another woman. When she learned that, Agatha would no longer be able to taunt him about his failure. As to Harcourt——

A new thought flashed suddenly across his mind; and he sat for a few moments gazing straight before him, a hard smile upon his lips, and an evil light in his eyes. "It would but be in self-defence; they had been the first to declare war. In fact, he had been scurvily treated all round; and they must take the consequences. But he must be content to wait until the proper time came to strike. Let Agatha still plume herself upon her conquest, and Miss Leith still believe in her lover. He saw a better way of reprisal than to open their eyes before the time was ripe. It might do Agatha more good to reap the consequences of her own folly than to be protected from them; and as for the other two——" The smile upon his lips grew harder, and he went on with his luncheon more enjoyably, making himself more agreeable than he had yet been to little Miss Maitland, who sat on his left hand, and partook heartily of what was offered to her, making the meal as much a business as everything else she engaged in.

Meanwhile the children were left pretty much to their own devices, and made the most of the opportunity, readily accepting any and everything that was presented to them by the good-natured, if somewhat injudicious, portion of the guests.

"It couldn't be better in real fairy-land!" whispered Mima to Algy, her cheeks expanding, and her whole face shining with contentment.

Too much absorbed in her own reflections to take any heed of what was going on, and not, in fact, knowing very exactly what they ought or ought not to eat, Mabel sat quietly by, while her charges partook indiscriminately of Perigord pie, salad, fruit-tarts, cream-cheese, and anything else that came in their way, even to sips of champagne, enjoyably eating on until Algy's beautiful pink and white complexion became clouded, and Mima suddenly emerged from "fairy-land," heavy-eyed and cross, proclaiming her unqualified disgust at things in general, and picnics in particular. She became quarrelsome, and finding Algy

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quite prepared to take up the glove, they presently came to open warfare, amidst a storm of tears and angry ejaculations.

"Really!" ejaculated Mrs. Brandreth, as, after an ineffectual attempt to soothe and quiet them, Mabel took the two by the hand and dragged them away, "Miss Leith seems to have no influence over the children whatever. I was half afraid to bring them without a nurse, although they ought to be old enough now."

Mr. Hurst eagerly sprang up, begging Mrs. Brandreth to allow him to try and help Miss Leith; but his mother immediately found occupation for him in another direction. "Dear Miss Norton wanted to be shown the way to the 'View.'"

Miss Severn turned towards Noel and sweetly advised him to try what he could do to help Miss Leith with the children. He was so great a favourite with them, and had been of assistance to their governess before, hadn't he? showing by her manner and meaning looks that she was not unaware of his meetings with Mabel and her pupils on their daily walks. Her readiness to send him was additional proof of what his sister had told him, and did not tend to soothe his wounded vanity. Ready as he had been to throw off his allegiance to her, if it suited his purpose so to do, he did not like to know that it was no longer desired, resenting the idea of being unnecessary to the happiness of any woman whom he might take the trouble to captivate. He turned on his heel with a muttered oath, but not to go in search of the governess.

"Do you not think I am very considerate in helping him to find the opportunity he was wishing for?" added Miss Severn to her elderly admirer; desirous to set his mind at rest in the event of any rumour having reached him respecting Noel's attentions to herself, and going on to explain that she had heard he was *épris* with the governess, which was in fact true—she had heard it.

Mrs. Brandreth found Gerard unusually grave and abstracted. In vain did she put forth her powers of conversation for his behoof. For some reason she could not fathom, he seemed to-day altogether unimpressionable and different from himself as she had previously known him. Even her little hint, as they rose from luncheon, of her desire to ascertain whether a certain walk just beyond the weir was as pretty as it was said to be, seemed to fall on deaf ears. He turned away with a word or two about trying what he could do to help Miss Leith amuse the children, and walked off

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in search of them, leaving Mrs. Brandreth with the dowagers of the party.

Gerard found Mabel and the children—still sufficiently uncomfortable to be quarrelsome, and give her a deal of trouble—near the weir. Nor could she induce him to leave her to manage them, and rejoin the others, whose merry voices and light-hearted laughter reached them now from one part of the woods, now another, as they explored in different directions. No; he had gone there to help her, and steadily set about it, showing not a little tact and consideration in so contriving matters as not to intrude himself upon her.

The look of fear—the way in which she shrank back when he came up—and the few hurried words of protest that "indeed, indeed, she needed no assistance," had only the effect of rendering him more firm in his purpose. He must, at all costs, make her recognize that she could trust him to wound her no more.

Drawing Algy and Mima to his side with the promise that he had something interesting to show them, he left Mabel with quiet, gentle Sissy, and set forth with the other two. They were somewhat captious at first, wanting to have a fair understanding as to what it was they were to see. But he hurried them along, telling himself, with a grim smile, that here was an opportunity for testing the efficacy of Aubyn's remedy. He walked with such rapid strides as to oblige them to quicken their steps into a run in order to keep up with him, which left them very little breath for further questioning. In the expectation of presently coming upon some delightful surprise, they hurried eagerly on by his side, until his chief end was gained—dyspepsia was overcome—and they were in the best of humours again. Not a little disappointed were they when they found that they had been brought so long a distance at racing speed only to look at "a stupid old ruin, and trees and things."

But he gravely explained that he could not know that they had no taste for such things. They graciously exonerated him from blame, and in recognition of this, he did his best to make the way back shorter, by narrating to them some of his adventures in Norway, and what Algy considered better still, a hair-breadth escape from some brigands in Spain. He brought them back to Mabel quite cured, and they informed Sissy in a whisper, that he was much better to be with "than you would ever think."

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Mabel sat gazing at the falling water with troubled, unseeing eyes. Sissy remained silent, nestling closely up to her side, with the intuitive perception that there was something wrong, and that she could best express her sympathy that way. Mabel was not too much absorbed to be unheedful of the love by her side, turning once or twice to kiss the little hand put up with timid tenderness to stroke her cheek.

When they were rejoined by Gerard and the two children, Mabel rose with nervous haste, saying that the carriages were ordered for four, and that there would be only just time to go through the woods and up the lane.

"Thank Mr. Harcourt, Algy. It was kind," with a momentary upward glance into his eyes, expressive of her own appreciation.

He stood aside with a bow, and they passed on, the children murmuring a little discontentedly at having to return without having gone through the whole of the programme, by helping to gather sticks to boil the water, and having tea like gipsies.

On her homeward drive Mrs. Brandreth found her companion very dull and *distrait*. But there was a great deal more respect in the quiet gravity of his bearing towards her, could she have understood and appreciated it, than when he had indulged her in the kind of talk she preferred. That she could imagine he admired her did not for a moment cross his mind. On the contrary, he believed that he had allowed his opinion of her to be too evident to others if not to herself. But all that was over now. No woman's folly or weakness would again be made a jest of by Gerard Harcourt. For one woman's sake all would now be safe from his satire.

(*To be continued.*)

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THE SHORTER POEMS OF ROBERT BRIDGES.

IN a Note at the end of his volume of Shorter Poems, Mr. Bridges explains its division into four books. "The poems contained in Book I. are my final selection from a volume published in 1873. Those of Book II. are from a pamphlet published in 1879. Book III. is made up of poems from a pamphlet published in 1880; to which are added others of about the same date. . . . Some of these have already appeared in a volume printed for me by my friend the Rev. C. H. Daniel in 1884. All the poems in Book IV. are now printed for the first time."

The volumes referred to in this note sometimes allure the eye in a bookseller's catalogue, offered for their weight in silver; the pamphlets, far more rarely, offered for their weight in gold: but the poor scholar to whom a *Daniel* is as a *Bodoni*, and who did not happen to hear of the unadvertised shilling pamphlets before Mr. Bridges again hardened his heart and withdrew them, has been hitherto compelled to make his own copy from the library of a more fortunate friend, or the British Museum. Mr. Bridges is to be congratulated on his condescension from such a seventh heaven into the open day of this ordinary world.

It is now seventeen years since Mr. Bridges' first book of poems issued from the Chiswick Press, under the auspices of the English disciple of Aldus. A poet's first volume is always interesting to look back upon. It is possible after the lapse of two or three decades to discover in it, even in the poems which the author's maturer judgment rejects, the fresh voice, and the new harmonies, which constitute his gift to the world. At this time we have no leisure for such an investigation: we refer to the book for the sake of quoting a sentence from the dedicatory letter to Mr. H. E. Wooldridge. "At the present time, when

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men seem to affect to have outgrown the rules of art, it is natural in one who turns to the great masters for satisfaction, to exaggerate the success of any attempt to work in their manner, and I know that it is where these poems aim at nothing else that they best please you." To this let us add a sentence from the "Note" to Mr. Bridges' poem, "Eros and Psyche": "In the absence of notes, it may be well to refer generally to Father Homer, Pindar, Plato, Moschus, Callimachus, the Greek anthology, Lucian, Lucretius, Virgil, Dante, Petrarch, Botticelli, Titian, Rafael, Spenser, Wyatt, the mighty Shakespeare, and others." It would be hardly fair to treat such an acknowledgment of particular obligations as a general confession of faith; but the two passages may at least be allowed to illustrate each other, and confirm the evidence of the poems themselves, that in many matters of his art Mr. Bridges is reactionary.

Of Victorian influence the reader will find none or little; there are no echoes of Tennyson, or Browning, or Arnold; few of the previous generation of poets; there may be a reminiscence of Wordsworth in iv. 22; of Shelley in ii. 13; perhaps a touch of Blake's rhythm in iv. 14; but except for these, and a stray note of Mr. Swinburne in the Elegy (i. 2), the antecedents of the book must be sought in other countries, or if in England, then in England of the 16th century; and in that century less in Spenser or "the mighty Shakspeare" than Wyatt, Sidney, and certain madrigal writers in the *Miscellanies*. Mr. Bridges' kinship with the earlier Elizabethans may be discerned, on the one hand in his choice of metres, his fondness for emphatic rhymes and a crisper vocabulary than that of to-day; and, on the other, in the simplicity and directness of his expression of thought, though the thought itself is apt to be more recondite. Several poems in the volume before us are in a hexasyllabic metre, which was also a favourite metre of Wyatt's: a comparison of the two will show the nature of the influence. The following stanzas are from Tottell's *Miscellany* (Arber, p. 50):—

"Marvell no more altho
The songs I sing do mone:
For other lyfe than wo,
I never proued none.
And in my hart also
Is graven with letters depe
A thousand sighs and mo:
A flood of tears to wepe.

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How may a man in smart
  Find matter to rejoice?
How may a moornying hart
  Set foorth a pleasant voice?
Play whoso can that part:
  Nedes must in me appere
How fortune ouerthwart
  Doth cause my moorning chere."

We venture to say that if these two stanzas appeared in a modern magazine, competent but unlearned critics would attribute them to the earlier muse of Mr. Bridges; just as, if certain verses of Lord Herbert of Cherbury's "Ode on the Immortality of Love" were to appear under the same circumstances, they would be recognized for Lord Tennyson's. But the reader must judge for himself. This is Mr. Bridges' "Description of such a one as he would love" (ii. 1), in a dialogue between the Muse and the Poet.

"*Will Love again awake.*
  That lies asleep so long?
O hush! ye tongues that shake
  The drowsy night with song.

It is a lady fair
  Whom once he deigned to praise,
That at the door doth dare
  Her sad complaint to raise.

She must be fair of face,
  As bold of heart she seems,
If she would match her grace
  With the delight of dreams.

Her beauty would surprise
  Gazers on Autumn eves,
Who watched the broad moon rise
  Upon the scattered sheaves.

O sweet must be the voice
  He shall descend to hear,
Who doth in Heaven rejoice
  His most enchanted ear.

The smile, that rests to play
  Upon her lip, foretells
What musical array
  Tricks her sweet syllables.

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And yet her smiles have danced
In vain, if her discourse
Win not the soul entranced
In divine intercourse.

She will encounter all
This trial without shame,
Her eyes men Beauty call,
And Wisdom is her name.

Throw back the portals then,
Ye guards, your watch that keep,
Love will awake again
That lay so long asleep."

Too much must not be made of Mr. Bridges' metrical debt to the 16th century. There he began, but there he has not ended. He has sat no less at the feet of Milton, and if his plays were at present in evidence, it might be said without fear of dissent, that no one since Milton has written such accomplished blank verse or such majestic choruses (in the Greek sense). One of these, (from *Prometheus the Firegiver*), is reprinted (iii. 1) in the present volume, and those to *Achilles in Scyros* may be praised in passing.

It is probable that the precision of the metre will be the first quality of Mr. Bridges' verse to strike the reader of this volume. Accustomed as he is to the laxer prosody introduced by Coleridge (who compared metre to "yeast," regarding it only as a "stimulant of the attention," not as an end in itself), the reader on first opening Mr. Bridges' poems may find the change rather too bracing for his æsthetic system. The present reviewer, though he delights to honour this stern Puritanism in general, finds yet here and there a poem not tolerable; such as the Rondeau (i. 15), with its unpleasant sequence of rhymes—dips, sips, hips, clips, tips, lips, drips, strips; the double-rhymed stanzas beginning "Dear Lady, when thou frownest" (i. 6), and "Since thou, O fondest and truest" (iii. 17); * and again, those beginning, "Fire of heaven, whose starry arrow," all of which, it must be said, jig.

In regard to metrical matters, poets fall roughly into two classes, which may be distinguished by two common metaphors,

* The reader will find the only successful instance known to the present writer of an "iambic" 3½-foot stanza with two dissyllabic rhymes in a poem in Davison's 'Poetical Rhapsody,' beginning "Sweet love, mine only treasure, For service long unfeigned." The author, "A. W.," occasionally reminds one of Mr. Bridges.

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those whose "numbers flow," and those whose lines are "well-filed;" * and the latter class have commonly the further amusing characteristic of arrogating to themselves solely the title of "artist." Of the liquid school Shakespeare is king; and we find Ben Jonson, a chieftain of the opposite or Vulcanic party, somewhat uneasy at his neighbour's ease; he told Drummond of Hawthornden "that Shakespeare wanted art," and every reader must feel that the second part of the fine eulogium prefixed to the first Folio is of the *laudando præcipere* kind; Milton too, who was "sealed of the tribe of *Ben*," speaks of Shakespeare's "native woodnotes *wild*." In the next century we have Gray of the one side and Collins of the other, and we find Gray writing to Thomas Wharton that Collins had "a bad ear." At the beginning of the present century Shelley inherits in double measure, what Coleridge also shares, the fluidity of Chaucer, and Shakespeare and Collins; while Wordsworth (except in his blank verse) best represents the tradition of the smithy, not without its traditional disdain. But it is interesting in this case to find the representative of the liquid school for once retorting. In the preface to the "Witch of Atlas," Shelley contrasts his Witch with Wordsworth's "Peter Bell," in a phrase which Shelley's successors, if such there be, will find full of consolation:

> "Light the vest of flowing metre
> She wears, he proud as dandy with his stays."

Mr. Bridges, as we pointed out above, began his career as a poet with a lament over the decay of "art," in which he shows himself of the faction of Jonson, Milton, and Gray; and it must be acknowledged that his lines are even more finely filed.

The poems which exhibit the greatest mastery over pure metre are those printed together at the beginning of Book III. The reader may not at first think so, because the rhythm is irregular, and does not beat time for him; but if he will only trust himself, and lay stress where accent and emphasis require, he will find that these reveal a latent metre. This method of writing, which on its first public appearance was styled a "new prosody," is an inversion of Mr. Bridges' ordinary method, in which the accented syllables of words occur regularly (unless for special reasons they do *not*) † in the stressed places of the verse.

* The distinction holds more or less in prose, as may be seen by comparing De Quincey and Mr. Pater.

† In this case Mr. Bridges sometimes marks them with an accent, as in the stanza quoted below.

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In both methods stress and accent coincide, and the syllables in the unstressed places are short. How much a peculiarity this is the reader may be interested to discover for himself by an examination of contemporary writing. Of the poems written in the "new prosody," the finest is that "On a dead Child," one of the few poems upon death in English which really touch one; the cleverest is that upon "London Snow," of which, as we now are speaking only of metre, a few verses must find place here.

LONDON SNOW.

"When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:
Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.
All night it fell, and when full inches seven
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
Its clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;
And all awoke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness;
The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare."

Attention may also be directed to several instances of the skilful management of the six-line stanza used by Spenser in his "Astrophel" (ii. 3, 10; iii. 77, from the last and best of which a verse will be quoted below); as well as to a fine example of the "Rime Royal" (iii. 13), a noble and characteristic "Ode to Joy."

But good rhythm is only one constituent of beautiful verse, just as grace is only one constituent of human beauty; in the one we require beauty of colour, as well as of line and movement; and in the other, besides rhythm, what we have no more distinctive name for than "music," or "melody." Every poet worthy of his title must have his own music; the music of Shelley's verse is of a different quality from Coleridge's; Mr. Swinburne once happily contrasted them as lark with nightingale; a typical Tennysonian line is unmistakable ("Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy"), and so is a line of Browning, when his throat is clear ("Silent silver lights and darks undreamt of"), or a line of Arnold,

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("The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea"). Has Mr. Bridges then a peculiar music? To determine the question let us choose a verse from each of the four parts of his book.

"I sang it to the sky,
That veiled his face to hear
How far her azure eye
Outdoes his splendid sphere;
But at her eyelids' name
His white clouds fled for shame."—(i. 13.)

"Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,
When skies are cold, and misty, and hail is hurling,
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling."—(ii. 2.)

"Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,
Uncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree:
And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake;
Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!"—(iii. 15.)

"Spring goeth all in white,
Crowned with milk-white may:
In fleecy flocks of light
O'er heaven the white clouds stray.

White butterflies in the air;
White daisies prank the ground:
The cherry and hoary pear
Scatter their snow around."—(iv. 8.)

The last example is a complete poem; the other verses are rudely torn from their context and suffer in consequence; but not so much that they do not leave clearly audible an unmistakably fresh voice. But this is only half what we wished to show. The first casual reader of the book could discover that: for the voice is aggressively fresh, at least among modern voices; the more important question of course is, Is the voice musical? We should not care to possess the organ of hearing which, after listening to these four examples, decides in the negative. "Qui habet aurem, audiat." Possibly the reader will prefer the last example of the four; it has greater simplicity; it has the air of having been cast at a jet, and so indeed it may have been; only there has been infinite pains spent upon the mould. To the

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critic Mr. Bridges' arrangement of his volume in chronological order is most interesting. He knows that in the case of certain poets—Wordsworth, for example—their early work is the best; that in the case of others, like Keats, the last is the best; and that in the case of yet others, like Coleridge, good and bad have no relation to time. If any poet ever sang "but as the linnet sings," it was Coleridge; the story of his composing "Kubla Khan" in a dream is an allegory of all his best work; of him the word "inspiration" might almost be interpreted in its popular sense of a passive will and a dictating Muse. Mr. Bridges stands at the opposite pole of creation from Coleridge; he is always self-possessed; his will is always alive and active, sometimes too active; so that we are fain to cry "How clever!" or with Polonius, "*gibbous moon* is good." And therefore the critic is not surprised to discover that the difference between first and last in Mr. Bridges' work is principally in the degree of the artist's skill. There was no turbid imagination in his first book which needed clarifying; many of its poems were professedly studies and exercises; and from that point the critic may trace the growth of the artist's cunning until, as in the last example quoted, it reaches the perfection of self-concealment.

A few words about Vocabulary. In accuracy of use Mr. Bridges leaves nothing to desire, but in this he cannot be said to go beyond other poets, his contemporaries, who are scholars. His greater austerity shows itself in points of accentuation and syntax, in a habit of tight packing his lines, and now and then in preference for forms etymologically more correct but obsolete, such as "an eaves," "a pease," revivals of doubtful euphony, and against the genius of the modern language. A further distinction may be traced in his large use of monosyllables, especially such crisp monosyllables as "spy," "stay," "stint," "stud," "tent," "trick," "fleck." The *Spectator* once rested an indictment against Mr. Arnold's morals on his fondness for the word "cool;" an equally good (or bad) case might be made out against Mr. Bridges for his constant use of "scatter."

We approach now the bewildering topic of Imagination. The poet, we are taught, is of "imagination all compact," but no one tells us clearly what this "imagination" may be. Coleridge, the greatest critic England ever had, warned us against confusing it with a use of imagery, and promised a definition; but when it came to the point he found it more convenient to quote Schelling, and contented himself with illustrations from Wordsworth. In the

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case of a dramatist, we know at once what we mean by imagination; the dramatist creates, "he gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name." But how can a lyric poet in dealing with the world we know, be said to create? The fact would seem to be that the word must cover the poet's whole *emotional* view of things, in which he sees them in a new light, "the light that never was on sea or land." He is a poet, we like to think, by virtue of this "divine vision," together with the "divine faculty" of representing it to us. Every man of education has his working theory of the universe, which may be mainly metaphysical or mainly scientific, or mainly a familiarity with what lies before the unassisted senses; or on the other hand it may be only secondarily one of these, and primarily emotional. It is thus with the poets; in the heat of their emotion, things which to us look so fixed and solid, dissolve, take new combinations, and discover strange likenesses to other things. In this imaginative mood we may all have a faint share at times; in poets it may alternate with other moods, as in Wordsworth with his philosophy; but in every case it is as individual as any other passion. How different was Shelley's world from Keats', and from Coleridge's!

This is a digression, but it is dangerous to use the word "imagination" without some scholion. How may we describe Mr. Bridges' imagination? His plays are not at this time before us, or we might decide, what in the present writer's judgment is the fact, that his chief imaginative gift is dramatic. As it is, our question must be, What in his lyrics does Mr. Bridges present to us as his view of the world?

His view would seem to be in the main scientific; that is to say, the view obtained by the bodily senses at their best. For accuracy of observation and power to convey a no less accurate impression Mr. Bridges is not second to Lord Tennyson. We remember nothing in English poetry superior as a picture of still life, to the verses entitled "Last week in February 1890" (iv. 5); or as a picture of motion to these two quatrains (iv. 3).

"The upper skies are palest blue
  Mottled with pearl and fretted snow:
With tattered fleece of inky hue
  Close overhead the storm-clouds go.

Their shadows fly along the hill
  And o'er the crest mount one by one;
The whitened planking of the mill
  Is now in shade and now in sun."

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unless it be a stanza upon shooting a bridge (in iii. 7):

> "Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,
> Where with its arches three it sucked the mass
> Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,
> Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass;
> And pulling for the middle span, we drew
> The tender blades aboard, and floated through."

Worthy of particular note too is the poem upon "the Windmill" (iv. 13), and for further confirmation we may be allowed to refer to two passages in *Eros and Psyche*, one describing the action of gravitation (vi. 27), the other the remarkable sunsets of a few years since, (i. 25), and to the Fire chorus in *Prometheus*. The critic with a case to plead may protest that such writing is a mere *tour de force*, but the reader is not likely to grumble; he will wish that more poets were capable of such force, and reflect with Calverley "how much fewer volumes of verse there 'd be," if poets were licensed only on such condition. But, no doubt, both critic and the "general" reader prefer poems in which description is subordinate to some emotion; and such there are. In the earliest section of all is the exquisite *Elegy* (i. 2), with its unforgettable use of the word *touch;* and the *Poppy* (i. 9), and there are many later; the best is the last and shortest (iv. 12), possibly the most perfect poem in the book.

> "The hill pines were sighing,
> O'ercast and chill was the day:
> A mist in the valley lying
> Blotted the pleasant May.
>
> But deep in the glen's bosom
> Summer slept in the fire
> Of the odorous gorse-blossom
> And the hot scent of the brier.
>
> A ribald cuckoo clamoured,
> And out of the copse the stroke
> Of the iron axe that hammered
> The iron heart of the oak.
>
> Anon a sound appalling,
> As a hundred years of pride
> Crashed, in the silence falling:
> And the shadowy pine-trees sighed."

It remains to speak shortly of the other contents of the volume. The poems of Sentiment and Reflection are pitched in a lofty key;

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several of them have been incidentally referred to, such as the "Ode to Joy," and the lines "On a Dead Child;" others deserving particular notice are the two "Spring Odes," which contrast the pleasures of town and country life to a man of feeling and education. In the lyric of pure passion Mr. Bridges is not happy. "My bed and pillow are cold" (iii. 10), may serve as an instance. The song to Joy (iv. 2) is inarticulate; if this be compared with the sonnet "Ah heavenly joy" (No. LXXV. in the series called "The Growth of Love," printed at Mr. Daniel's press) it will be seen clearly where Mr. Bridges' strength lies and does not lie. There are many love-lyrics in the book touched with graceful fancy, but they leave one cold; "I have loved flowers that fade" (ii. 13) is a fine variation on the theme of Shelley's "Music when soft voices die;" "I praise the tender flower" (iii. 8), and "I love my lady's eyes" (iii. 16), are beautifully carved in ivory; two love poems, however, there are, which have the pulse of life. The one is dramatic, *The Philosopher to his Mistress* (iii. 5); the other, "Thou didst delight my eyes" (iii. 12), with an especially fine last stanza. All these are in six-syllable lines. It was Coleridge's advice to Tennyson, according to the *Table Talk*, to write in one metre until he had thoroughly mastered it; Mr. Bridges' practice has certainly made him the greatest living master of the six-syllable verse.

H. C. BEECHING.

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ASTRÆA REDUX.

ADOWN the walk,
The garden all aglisten 'twixt two showers,
She passed, and left commotion 'mongst the flowers.
Shook the tall arum's stalk
With envy; blushed the rose more crimson yet
Sighing, "Farewell, my reign!"; the violet
Drooped lower her sweet head,
"My crown of modesty must wither now," she said.

In the far prime,
Bright rose from Eastern foam the Cyprian queen,
And men fell down in worship, nor had been
In the long tract of time
Peer to that splendour; Greece reputed wise
And reverenced Pallas of the owl-dark eyes;
But when this wonder came
Old-vaunted worth grew poor, past loveliness a name.

Would'st learn what dark
Threatens, what unimagined blackness' reign,
If the Immortals' envy snatch again
Their, and Earth's, darling? Mark
How, when some flying star with trailing hair
Has quenched its burning path in turbid air,
Only by Night o'ercast
The amazèd heavens can guess what untold splendour passed.

Ask not her name:
The light winds whisper it on every hand;
The river rustling where, by sedgy strand,
Lily and iris flame,

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Murmurs no other; save of her is heard
No utterance in earth; and the glad bird
Of morning, that on high
Triumphant mounts and sings, proclaims her through the sky.

Were there no tongue
But mine to syllable her beauty's praise,
My voice should weary heaven and earth with lays;
Methinks 'twould not be long
Ere to each waste and pathless crag were known
That preciousness! but now my songs are grown
Needless importunate things,
And slander of desert wherewith a whole world rings.

R. WARWICK BOND.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

Notes from Paris—The Handel Festival.

Notes from Paris.

The successful strike of the omnibus men could not but produce more attempts of the kind amongst all the discontented of various callings—and they are Legion.

Everything human being open to improvement, there is, not unnaturally, a general wish to profit, individually, by possible improvements. So the bakers' men led the way, with the idea that they were about to terrify Paris into submission, on pain of reducing its inhabitants to the condition experienced during the memorable siege. But they were strangely mistaken in their anticipations; the way being now open all around Paris, railways can bring any amount of food required as fast as it is needed; besides the assistance provided by the army, which, being under recognized discipline, ignores strikes. It is reckoned that 1,800,000 lbs. of bread are required daily for the city of Paris; the flour-mills and bakeries of the army alone could provide half that quantity, while such additional supplies were poured in from the suburbs and the provincial towns, even as far as Marseilles, that plenty became overpowering; with the additional mortifying discovery that bread might be of better quality in many places than what is found even in Paris! Bakers and butchers (who also threatened to refuse their services) discovered that the battle was too hard to fight, and although grumbling meetings are still held, they have virtually surrendered, while relieving their feelings by "tall talk," which does no harm. Hair-dressers' assistants also considered themselves ill-used, and tried to go out on strike; but soon discovered that no one absolutely required them, and that the privation was endured with Parisian philosophy by the general public.

The great subject of complaint common to all the strikers refers to the dealings of the various agencies, and not those of the masters by whom they are employed.

In former days, the men seeking work stood on the banks of the

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Seine, "sur la grève," awaiting engagements, so that being out of work, or disengaged, was called "être en grève," or free to stand "sur la grève" with the unemployed. "La Place de Grève," famous in olden times as the scene of executions, and often of popular disturbances (where Victor Hugo's "Esmeralda" danced before the church of Notre-Dame), was so called from its proximity to the banks of the Seine ("les grèves") which induced the men to stand there, as a convenient place to be hired.

The custom has fallen into disuse, but the name remains, and is now misapplied to those voluntarily refusing employment.

The old direct intercourse between masters and men, chosen freely upon personal inspection, no longer exists, and the only means of getting regular employment is now practically confined to the action of the various Agencies, who seem to take undue advantages, and are likely to be roughly treated sooner or later. They are accused not only of charging a too high percentage, but also of insidiously causing the dismissal of the men, with a view to multiplying their own profits. The Agencies being, like most French institutions, under the direct control of the police, provide, however, some guarantee as to the character of the men recommended, which could not easily be procured elsewhere. But the campaign now taking place against them, and the increased ill-will of the men, suggest the possibility of supplying their place by other means, which, though not devoid of serious objections, are now under discussion and may prevail.

One of the most curious trades in Paris, and one of the most characteristic, is that of the *chiffonniers*, or rag-pickers, who are now getting up a small demonstration of their own, in opposition to the free importation of a paste made of saw-dust, which is used for coarse paper. Their trade has already suffered considerably from the introduction of dust-bins, regularly emptied every morning by carts, which go round for the purpose; but notwithstanding police regulations, a good deal of rubbish is still thrown in the street, and the "chiffonnier" may be seen at late hours of the night, with his basket on his back, his lantern, and the long hook with which he turns over the refuse. The "chiffonniers" state that at present they cannot earn more than 15 or 20 sous a day, *beyond their food, which they pick up thus*, or which is given to them. They will turn any refuse to account, and make something out of it (infinitely repulsive, and apparently deleterious), but from which they do not shrink!

With a tax on the saw-dust paste, for which they petition, they might earn 5 or 6 sous a day more than at present, for the price of rags would then rise. All the cotton and linen rags of good quality are, it is said, kept for the English market, the French retaining only what is inferior. The woollen rags are unravelled and carded, and made into

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cheap goods; the red trousers of the French army, for instance, are thus turned into caps, which are sold by hundreds of thousands in Asia Minor. Silk rags, treated in the same manner, are used for the padding of various articles. Bottles of all kinds are highly appreciated, but even bits of glass are useful, being ground up into dust for glass-paper. Many bottles and china pots are bought from the "chiffonniers" to be used for fraudulent imitations. Old corks are cut to fit small phials. Old play-bills or advertisements are pounded up for pasteboard. Bits of cigars are a great treat, reserved for the use of the "chiffonnier" himself. Old tins are very valuable; often the "chiffonnier" fills them with earth, and uses them like bricks to build a wall, supporting a hut, made of every imaginable refuse; as may be seen by those who have the curiosity to visit the "cités des chiffonniers," where they congregate, encamped like savages. When the tins are not kept for the "chiffonnier's" own use, they are turned into the little trifles and toys sold so wonderfully cheap at the booths of fairs, or at the New Year. The ingenuity with which the French make something pretty out of what would seem to be the most hopeless rubbish is really very remarkable.

There are 20,000 "chiffonniers" in Paris; it is needless to add that they are the dregs of the population. But, strange to say, they are generally honest, and often bring to the police anything of value found amongst the odds and ends which are their legitimate property. It is stated that their peculiar business represents, daily, a sum of 30,000 francs (£1200), incredible as this may seem to those who have not studied the question. In favourable times the "chiffonnier" earns on an average from 2 to 3 francs a day.

The terrible catastrophe of Menchœstein, near Basle, has caused a good deal of anxiety as to the safety of railway bridges in France, especially those built in the days when railway-traffic was considerably less, and which, therefore, may be supposed to be inadequate for present requirements and the enormous strain of multiplied heavy trains. The bridge of Asnières, near Paris, which crosses the Seine on the Western line, was foremost in the minds of enquirers, for all Parisians are called upon to pass over it frequently on their way to St. Germain, Versailles, and Hâvre. It is now stated that, after careful examination, no fears need remain as to its perfect safety. The final test usually applied is an experimental train (made up to a weight of four times that of an average train), which is brought to a stand-still on the middle of the bridge and left there for some time; it is then moved backwards and forwards over the bridge, at a rate of speed beginning at 20 kilomètres* an hour, and increasing to 50 kilomètres.

The bridges are carefully tested, in all their component parts, every year.

* An English mile represents about 1¼ kilomètre.

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It must be acknowledged that the management of French railways is exceedingly careful, and that accidents are comparatively few. After the war, the Companies took great pains to put everything in perfect order, after the unavoidable deterioration which had taken place, with the result that, between the years 1871 and 1880, on all the French lines only one traveller out of 28,000,000 has been killed, and one injured in 880,000.

In England, the proportion of killed is one in 13,000,000 of travellers; in Belgium, one in 25,000,000. Germany is the only country with fewer accidents than in France, the trains being very slow.

The "Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée" line, so much used by English travellers to the Riviera and Italy, is the least favourably noted as regards safety; which has given rise to the grim joke that the characteristic initials "P. L. M." used by the Company, should be interpreted, "Pour La Mort!"

The severe winter has caused sad havoc in the flower-gardens, and still more in the fields of roses and violets around Paris, which supply the flower trade. The love of flowers here is of comparatively recent date; in former days nothing was thought of in the way of decoration beyond the well-known stiff bouquets in regular circles surrounded with lace paper. Now, the flower-shops are marvellous; even after the severe frost flowers are procured somehow, and only the individuals having an especial interest in the matter could perceive any deficiency. The great flower-shop in the Rue Royale, with its wonderful orchids; also those of Vaillant, and Lion, on the Boulevard des Capucines, are perfect pictures of exquisitely grouped flowers, all faultless specimens, which seem to come from fairy-land. The Japanese style is now in favour; large sprigs, with their buds and leaves assembled with that apparent carelessness which is the perfection of art, and tied with enormous bows of broad ribbon, twisted with the inimitable grace of Parisian fingers. These very choice flowers are sent to the florists direct from the nursery-gardens; but the flower-market at the Halles-Centrales begins its transactions at 4 o'clock A.M., and continues till about 8 o'clock A.M.

The "commissionnaires" who have their settled customers come first, to choose the flowers out of the baskets, sorting them into classes; the "très-beau" being reserved for the great florists, the simply "beau" for second-rate establishments; the "ordinaire" is made over to the street-sellers and the open-air markets. In winter, of course, the roses come from the Riviera; but after the end of May the roses of Nice and Cannes cease to be appreciated; only those growing round Paris are in favour. One variety of rose, called "la rose de France," under illustrious patronage, was much sought for a short time—but alas! the poor rose got into bad company, and since the unfortunate day when

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it was blended with the carnations of Boulanger, it has fallen into disgrace.

We can recommend for family reading "Amours Simples," par Pierre Maël; "Un Casque," par Henri Allais.

The Handel Festival.

The 13th Handel Festival adds another to the long list of successes connected with that event—an event which took place for the first time in 1784 in Westminster Abbey, and which has ever since held a most remarkable position in the annals of English music. The success of the early Festivals induced their promoters, in 1862, to establish a Triennial Musical Festival in honour of Handel, which has ever since been held at the Crystal Palace. It is perhaps the only English musical Festival which draws together an enormous mass of the general public, apart from that public representing music which may be found equally at any of our great country Festivals. Music, however to the majority of Englishmen is almost restricted to the name of Handel. Therefore the great gathering at the Crystal Palace bears a very special identity of its own; there, is to be heard what the English people *choose from music*, by giving it their entire support and approbation for more than a century; all classes of people are represented, but perhaps the Church has the foremost place. It must be remembered, in searching for the reasons of Handel's undoubted popularity over any other composer in England, that in, and for England, and to English words, were nearly all his greatest works composed, this last fact having, we believe, the strongest influence in obtaining for them the warm and widespread admiration which they certainly receive from all classes of English people. There has never been a time since its composition when the "Messiah" has not justly maintained a firm hold on the public mind. Even those among us who are not ardent Handel-worshippers, willingly bow the knee to the greatness of his "Messiah" and "Israel in Egypt," and their supremacy over the taste of the general public remains as undoubted as it was at their first hearing. No English Festival can afford to dispense, even if it were desirable to do so, with a performance of the "Messiah," and all country Societies combine in saying that, if only from a financial point of view, Handel's works are their most trustworthy and important support.

The broad, straightforward, easily comprehended style of this master seems to be specially adapted to the English nature, a style which we, as a nation, may almost be said to monopolize, for in no Continental musical event is such a tribute paid to Handel's name as that of which the recent performance at the Crystal Palace gives evidence. From a point of numbers alone, it must certainly be regarded as the most

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representative, if we cannot say the most interesting, of English Festivals.

The enormous numbers in the chorus impress an audience not strictly musical, though, apart from the volume of tone, musicians cannot but be more struck with what may be called *the machinery* of the performances, than by their intrinsic musical worth. The finer shades must be, and are, absent throughout the choruses. Only Handel's broad, full style, and love of straightforward repetition, make the good performances of the various works a possibility; it may moreover be doubted whether such a performance would be possible at all with the music of any master save Handel, for these obvious reasons.

Regarding the "Messiah" and "Israel" everything that could possibly be said has been written years ago, when Bartolozzi gave his talent to beautiful engravings for Festival books, putting to shame our *fin de siècle* "book of the Concert," and when the said book was a much more important and valuable affair than it is at present; so we will turn to the principal musical interest of the Festival of 1891, which consisted in the production for the first time in England of a fine "Gloria Patri," written by Handel at the age of twenty-three; this piece of music is the only example of his writing for a double chorus and double orchestra, and it is impossible to say how greatly this composition gained, in comparison with others, by being performed with the accompaniments exactly as Handel wrote them. The two orchestras consist of violins, violincellos and double basses, there is also an organ part, and the simplicity of the scoring resulted in a very fine and impressive effect. This work is the only known chorus of Handel's in eight parts of this period (1707–1708) with his signature, which gives it a special interest. It consists, musically, of three subjects, the latter of which the composer used later as an "Alleluia" in the Oratorio of "Deborah," and again in the "Coronation Anthem." It is impossible to close even a short notice of the Handel Festival of 1891 without allusion to the magnificent singing of Mr. Santley, which will probably remain long in the memory of all who heard him; a lesson to every intelligent amateur present. Mr. Santley is no longer young, therefore opportunities of hearing him at his best should be very precious. Nothing could be finer than his performance throughout the Festival; his vigour, fire, and incomparable attack reached their highest point of excellency. His phrasing has few equals, his dramatic ideal, none. But in addition to its music, we believe the great position of the Handel Festival has for its basis, and for the source of its influence, that strong religious feeling, which first for the English people found its vent, musically speaking, in the great works and themes of George Frederic Handel.

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THE YOUNG EMPEROR WILLIAM II. OF GERMANY. By HAROLD FREDERIC. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) In a month of which the principal feature has been the cordial reception extended to His Imperial Majesty the German Emperor, there is of course something very appropriate in the production of this volume. It is an effort to trace the development of character in the young Kaiser since his elevation to the throne. But partly because the book has been produced to meet a present demand, partly perhaps owing to some predilections on the part of its author, it savours too much of journalism and too little of literature. No one can however deny that this volume forms an interesting study. In England we have been accustomed to think that the Emperor started with a certain dislike of our own nation, a mental attitude which was certainly not discouraged by Prince Bismarck. After our experience in the last month we are aware that the Emperor counts us among the chief friends of himself and of Germany. This change is sufficiently striking to give every Englishman an interest in the Kaiser Wilhelm; but when we have to add his unceasing vigour, his alertness to all the interests of the age, his fondness for sport, and the abundant evidences which he gives of a commanding and resolute personality—there is enough material to make for the majority of our countrymen a portrait which secures a very large measure of almost enthusiastic sympathy and attention.

NAVAL WARFARE. By REAR-ADMIRAL P. H. COLOMB. (*W. H. Allen & Co.*) There are other roads to fame than the path which leads to victory, and there are services which a man may render to his country perhaps greater than to die. Englishmen have reason to be proud of the wisdom, the public spirit, the wide knowledge and the singleness of purpose displayed in every page of Admiral Colomb's great work. He modestly attempts to fill the *rôle* of a pioneer in the untrodden ways of the history of naval tactics and strategies, with a view to lessening the danger threatening our Empire, which springs from a conviction that no laws can be discovered in the chaos of maritime affairs. That he has more than succeeded in establishing certain definite and permanent principles, such as no naval commander

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can afford to overlook, and as capable of application to the modern ironclad as to the wooden walls of Drake, no reader of the book before us will be able to doubt for a moment. Starting from the sixteenth century he shows clearly that naval warfare proper is no mere "system of cross-ravaging," burning a town here and capturing a vessel there, then returning to port leaving things much as they were. It means the struggle for the permanent command of the sea; just as territorial warfare aims at the possession of the land in dispute, so does naval warfare aim at the possession, so to speak, of the sea. For this, two things are necessary; first, that commerce should be so great as to make the great water-way valuable; and secondly, that a nation should possess a fleet capable of remaining at sea. In a long historical review he makes it clear that a great nation cannot afford to say with Lord Byron that "man's control stops with the sea," and that in fact every failure such as that of Spain in the sixteenth century can ultimately be traced to a neglect to secure the command of the sea before attempting to invade the lands beyond it. Into the technical details we have no space to enter; but we can only hope that so great a master of naval tactics will give the world the further benefit of his researches and experience in some future volume.

ESSAYS, REVIEWS, AND ADDRESSES. By Dr. James Martineau. (*Longmans, Green, and Co.*) The second volume of Dr. Martineau's Essays contains papers for the most part dealing with the ecclesiastical controversies of some forty years ago. They are, however, of considerable interest even in this last decade of the century, for, as becomes a philosopher, Dr. Martineau brings to bear upon his subject those principles which would guide "the spectator of all time and of all existence." The assertion of the supreme jurisdiction of the individual conscience, the key-note of his philosophy, only comes out the more strongly from the review of that conflict of Churches and sects in which the more short-sighted enquirer might feel himself hopelessly lost. Of his besetting sin, the tendency to substitute metaphor for proof, there is a good example on p. 221, where also, in characteristic fashion, he seeks to exalt mankind at the expense of the animal world. But it is not minor defects of this kind which the reader of these Essays will chiefly remember. It is rather the "free mind and large heart" revealed in every line of Dr. Martineau's writings.

ASCUTNEY STREET. By Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney. (*The Riverside Press: Cambridge, Mass. U.S.A.*). In writing a story the telling "a plain unvarnished tale" is not the aim that Mrs. Whitney sets before herself. The problems and perplexities of life allure her from the straight path of fiction into the devious by-ways of mild metaphysics, and into the maze of a transcendentally philosophic diction. In pursuing this aim Mrs. Whitney is neither daunted by the limitations of the English

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language nor hampered by the laws that regulate metaphor and analogy. Her similitudes run reckless riot among her characters and incidents, till her somewhat enigmatic sentence (applied to the fashionable inhabitants of Ascutney Street), "The seizing upon signs became an utter degeneration in realities," might be taken as the key-note of her treatment of her characters. In "Ascutney Street" the chess-board and "Alice through the looking-glass" supply her with the signs and symbols, by which (in preference to words and actions) she interprets the mind and nature of her hero and heroine. The analogy is sometimes happy; but it is too often far to seek; and we feel like the Highlander who, overhearing a waiter ordering his dinner of "one lamb and one potato," remonstrated, declaring he "would prefer a little less of the lamb and a little more of the potato." In Mrs. Whitney's last story, we should prefer a little more incident and a little less philosophy; especially when we remember how charming some of her earlier stories were, and with what sympathy and insight she depicted girl-life.

A GIRL IN THE CARPATHIANS. By M. M. Dowie. (*George Philip & Son*). We are perfectly willing to concede that Miss Dowie did a remarkable thing in living by herself in a peasant's cottage in Eastern Galicia, and in subsequently wandering among the Carpathians with no companion but a guide. Up to this point we are in sympathy with our authoress, and do not withhold our due meed of admiration from the pluck and endurance necessary for the enterprise. But we think that the originality (on which she dwells with unnecessary emphasis) displayed in her choice of a summer residence is not likely to awaken the spirit of emulation of other tourists. There does not seem enough that is either beautiful or interesting in the country that she describes to attract travellers, whose incursions into her beloved solitudes Miss Dowie evidently dreads. Of her personal experiences, her bathes, her rides, her meals, her purchases, and her daily life, she writes in a clever, lively manner, and with great literary facility, if not finish. Her account of the peasants and their homes is picturesque, but superficial. One page of Herr Franzos' writings gives us more knowledge of and insight into the native life of these unknown Eastern lands, with their mixed nationalities and semi-barbarous civilization, than the whole of Miss Dowie's book.

THE THREE MISS KINGS. By Ada Cambridge. (*Heinemann.*) It does not need a glance at the title-page to tell us that the writer of "The Three Miss Kings" is of the gentler sex. There is a lingering fondness in her descriptions of the beautiful garments which the "fairy godmother" bestows upon the lovely heroines not to be attained by the uninitiated male. But Miss Cambridge can do more

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than describe details of costume and circumstance. In her former novel, "A Marked Man," she showed that she could grapple with some of the deeper problems of our age, and in the book now before us there are love-scenes instinct with true and tender feeling, which go far to raise her above the crowd of contemporary novelists. She is clearly well-acquainted with the various phases of life in Australia, and she has given us a pleasant picture of Melbourne society, free from the extravagances which rather marred her earlier work.

ON HEATHER HILLS. (*Alexander Gardner.*) This seems to be the first work of some Scotch writer, the defects of whose present performance are more than counterbalanced by the marks of ability which promise much for the future. At present he needs to study the laws of construction and the necessary stages in the development of character. His transitions are too abrupt, and his situations sometimes impossible. The whole episode of May's desertion of her husband is against nature, given the circumstances of her marriage and the incredibly short time required to bring about her fall. Nor do we care greatly for the chapters in the style of Trollope, in which well-known politicians are introduced under slight disguises. Their conversation is heavy, as heavy as the laboured humour of the first chapter, in which Strong and the Australians are introduced. But in spite of all these glaring faults the story is undeniably a good one. There are scenes of real power and pathos, and there is a keen appreciation of the humours of the Highlands, as well as a love for the mountains and the heather, which shows itself in descriptive passages of genuine beauty.

RED-LETTER STORIES. By JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS. (*Osgood M'Ilvaine & Co.*) To those who enjoy real American humour, and have the good taste to appreciate a pathetic rendering of ridiculous situations, we can heartily recommend Mr. Harris's "Red-Letter Stories." He does not write about his Southern planters, his Confederate soldiers, or his negroes; he simply transports us across the intervening space and time, and puts us down amongst a people of whom he himself is one. When we reluctantly close the book we feel that we have talked with Uncle Billy Powers, that we have walked with Judge Bascom about the old Bascom place, that we were hidden in the pantry with Josiah and Major Jimmy Bass when the irate Miss Sarah returned from church to find the house empty, and that we applauded the great lawyer Mr. Terrell, when he successfully defended the guilty Ananias. And to those who have not gone through these experiences we can only say, "Go and get Mr. Harris to give you an introduction."

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THE LITTLE MANX NATION. By HALL CAINE. (*W. Heinemann.*) Every one who has had the good fortune to read Mr. Hall Caine's beautiful fictions, "The Bondman" and "The Deemster," knows well how deep a knowledge of the Manx nation, its spirit and its history, the author possesses. This knowledge is now put before us in the most delightful form imaginable by the publication of three lectures on "The Little Manx Nation." Whilst preserving the informal character of spoken words, they yet reveal an intimate knowledge of the ancient history of the island, and contrive to convey to the reader a more vivid idea of the people, their origin, their character, and their customs than would be possible in a more formal treatise. Further, the rapid transitions from grave to gay, from mock heroics to solemn earnest, which (*pace* Mr. Caine and his preface) proclaim the literary artist, give to the little book a charm and vigour peculiarly its own. In one word, we might say that it is long since we read anything of the kind which gave us equal pleasure.

THE NORMANS. By SARAH JEWETT. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) There is a curious variety in the style of these "Stories of the Nations." In some, for instance in Mr. Morrison's "The Jews under Roman Rule," we have a serious historical work making no pretence of popularity in the ordinary sense of the word; others, as in the present case, are apparently designed either for children, or for folk so ignorant of history that their minds are filled with absurd expectations such as no reasonable reader could for a moment entertain. Miss Jewett has a good knowledge of the period about which she writes, and it is a period which cannot fail to be interesting; but the grown-up reader resents the constant recurrence of such phrases as "that the Count made a donkey of himself in good earnest," nor is he greatly moved by exhortations to read the "Ballad of the Revenge" or Miss Yonge's "Little Duke." But if this volume be really designed for children, it is admirably adapted to its purpose; and "children of a larger growth" will find much in it worthy of their attention when they have overcome the prejudices awakened by its style.

POACHERS AND POACHING. By JOHN WATSON, F.L.S. (*Chapman & Hall.*) Mr. Watson is a close observer of nature, and we are glad that he has preserved the results of some of his observations in the present volume, instead of leaving them to go the unhonoured way of the majority of magazine articles. But it might be as well, perhaps, so to revise these reprinted papers as to prevent the recurrence of passages almost precisely the same, as, for instance, on pages 29 and 189, and again on pages 7 and 270. Mr. Watson has evidently made a close study of the habits and methods of poachers, and his work would form an excellent "Gamekeeper's Manual." Yet its title

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scarcely does it justice, for it is instinct with the love of the fields and woods, and all true lovers of nature will be grateful to him for letting them share in his pleasures.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT TO-DAY. By G. J. HOLYOAKE. (*Methuen & Co.*) This is the second volume of the useful series on "Social Questions of to-day," and is calculated to remove most of the prejudices born of ignorance which impede the great co-operative movement. Mr. Holyoake puts his case well and clearly. Glancing at the prophets of social reform in antiquity and in mediæval days, he comes quickly to Robert Owen, the father of English co-operation, and then goes on to explain the principle of profit-sharing applied equally to commerce and to labour. Like other social reformers he is a little dogmatic, and lays it down clearly that most of the errors of human society are due to a neglect to acknowledge the causation of the will, without deigning to tell us what he means by that much misunderstood phrase. But his book contains a great number of statistics relative to the co-operative movement, and furnishes a most useful manual of information on the subject.

THE ADVENTURES OF MENDEZ PINTO. Edited by ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) It was an excellent idea on the part of the publisher of "The Adventure Series" to give in his own words the narrative of the Prince of Adventurers. The edition now before us is a reprint, considerably abridged, of the translation made by Henry Cogan in 1663, and is appropriately introduced to the public by one who has himself seen men and things under extraordinary circumstances. M. Vambéry refutes the theory which would regard the narratives of Mendez Pinto and his like as mere audacious inventions, by pointing out that much which he relates has been subsequently verified, whilst a great deal is professedly related on hearsay evidence, and is of course exaggerated according to the tendency of the age. But the most interesting part of the preface is the passage in which the sneers directed at "mere adventurers" are deprived of their point by a reminder of the truth that "never did a man start on travel with the intention of becoming an adventurer; . . . he becomes such through the combination of circumstances." We heartily commend the whole book to our readers.

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MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER, 1891.

CALVARY AND THE TOMB OF CHRIST.

AMONGST the strangely manifold features which have combined to render the Victorian age the most remarkable, perhaps, in the history of the world, one of the most significant and important is this; that it has been pre-eminently the period of investigation and discovery. No branch of Nature, Art, or Science has escaped the keen and patient eye of the intelligent and determined explorer. The consequence has been a complete revolution and a new revelation in almost every realm of natural philosophy and physical research. Old theories have been scattered to the winds; old traditions have been ruthlessly dispelled; and nothing has been deemed too sacred to ward off the profane investigations of the scrutinising critic.

This has been emphatically true with regard to one particular branch of enquiry,—namely, the exploration and identification of ancient sites. In Greece and Italy, Egypt and Syria, the work has been steadily going forward; the pickaxe and shovel, the theodolite and chain, the shaft and trench, the aneroid and level, have invaded the cities and shrines of antiquity, and have cleared away the ignorance and errors of ages. Mysteries, hitherto deemed insoluble, have been solved; controversies, apparently interminable, have been set at rest; and beliefs, considered beyond all questioning, have been criticised and upset.

In no country has this been more conspicuous than in the Holy Land itself; where, cynically regardless of the most cherished traditions, a coldly calculating, strictly scientific, investigation has been applied to almost every so-called Holy site. It might have been supposed that, at least, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, the sacred shrine of Christendom for

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fifteen centuries and a half, would have been treated with a reverence too profound to admit of so daring a heresy as to impugn the genuineness of its claims. But no! the traditional sites of Calvary and of the Tomb of Christ have, in their turn, been exposed to the attacks of the critic; and a serious attempt is now being made to overthrow the creed of so many centuries, with regard to these most venerated sanctuaries.

The question is, What justification can there be for these attacks? for, unless cogent and convincing reasons can be produced in support of them, it is, undoubtedly, a most serious and responsible matter to endeavour to overthrow the tradition of universal Christendom, with respect to the very centre of Christian sentiment. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre has so long been regarded as the undoubted sanctuary which contains within it the scenes of our Lord's Death, Burial, and Resurrection; has been the theatre of so many deathly struggles, the shrine of so many toilsome pilgrimages, the embodiment of so much religious faith; that Christendom at large can hardly be expected to accept the overthrow of its claims, without a pang of sad regret, or without a demand for evidence in opposition to it which shall be beyond all reasonable refutation or doubt.

When, therefore, one is bold enough openly to assert that all the associations which have hitherto clung to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are founded upon error, and that the Hill of Calvary and the Tomb of Christ are situated in quite a different locality, one feels conscious that one is undertaking a terrible responsibility and laying oneself open to a tremendous attack. Nevertheless, the conviction that one is right is a great support; and in this conviction I am encouraged to enter upon the task which I have ventured to undertake, of adding my testimony to that of others who impugn the claims of the present site.

I. And first, let us enquire upon what basis the tradition of Christendom really rests. It seems strange at first sight that any doubt can possibly exist as to the true position of Calvary. Surely, one would imagine, a hill so conspicuous and notorious as that referred to in the Gospel narratives would have been able to retain such marks of identification, as to remove every possibility of mistake! Surely the Christian Church could never have failed to cherish with due reverence and to guard from oblivion the scenes of the Passion and Burial of their Lord! As a matter of fact, however, we know that the site was lost,—partly owing to the flight of the Christians to Pella, at the time of the

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siege of Jerusalem, and partly owing to the complete desolation in which the city lay until the Emperor Adrian converted it into a heathen place under the title of *Ælia Capitŏlina.* It is certain that the identity of Calvary was unknown in the earlier part of the 4th century A.D., and the Tomb of Christ had then been entirely lost; for when Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, undertook the pilgrimage to the Holy Land for the express purpose of discovering sacred sites, she could find no one in Jerusalem to point out to her the places where Christ had died and been buried. She was compelled to have recourse to a miraculous vision, upon the strength of which she fixed upon the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The three Crosses were discovered in a marvellous manner; though, even supposing the first disciple had carefully concealed the Cross of Christ, we have no ecclesiastical explanation why they should have equally respected the crosses of the thieves. The Empress Helena was, undoubtedly, a very pure-minded and earnest believer, and was moved by feelings of intense devotion and reverence in all that she did; but knowing as we do the ignorance, superstition, and unreasoning credulity which prevailed at the time when she lived, and from which she herself was by no means free, it is impossible for us to accept as trustworthy evidence for the identification of the sites into which we are enquiring, the illusory visions of a devotee. Surrounded as she was, moreover, by unscrupulous sycophants, whose business it was to gratify her devotional aspirations, it is a matter of no surprise that her researches should have been crowned with what she believed to be a miraculous success, nor that her discoveries should have been handed down by ecclesiastical tradition as irrefragable matters of undoubted truth. Such traditions, however, are obviously worthless, so far as critical enquiry is concerned, unless they can be shown to have been based upon some other foundation more solid and trustworthy than miracles and visions.

Now, the first cardinal point of which we are certain, with regard to the question before us, is that Calvary and the Tomb of Christ must have been situated *outside* the city. Every one agrees upon this point; not only because it is well known that no criminals were allowed to be executed, and no bodies to be buried, within the walls; but also because we are expressly told in the Bible itself, that "Christ suffered without the gate," * and that Calvary was "nigh unto the city," but not inside it.† Almost

* Heb. xiii. 12.

† St. John xix. 20.

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all of the most reliable authorities, who have investigated the matter carefully, are of opinion that the site of the present Church of the Holy Sepulchre was within the walls of Jerusalem at the time of Christ. Those who incline to the contrary belief are compelled to construct the plan of the walls in a most improbable and eccentric manner, in order to exclude the site; and it is evident, from the very result of their endeavours, that they have been actuated by the natural and meritorious desire to uphold, if possible, the Christian tradition of centuries. They were well aware that, if they failed, the question would be at once settled, so far as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre itself is concerned. I do not propose to enlarge upon the arguments concerning the direction of the walls of Jerusalem, for it would carry this paper to an inordinate length; but those who feel interested in the matter, will find the whole question thoroughly discussed in the large volume on Jerusalem in the Memoirs of the Palestine Exploration Survey. Suffice it to say that the weight of evidence and opinion decidedly preponderates in favour of including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre within the *second* wall, *i.e.* within the city at the time of Christ.

But, even if we admit that the site may have been outside, this by no means proves that the Empress Helena and the subsequent ecclesiastical tradition were right in locating Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre there. It simply makes it a *possible* site. It appears to be considered that the whole question turns upon the direction of the second wall. This is very far from being the case. It merely raises the claim of the present site from the sphere of impossibility; it does not prove that it is probably, much less certainly, correct. There still remains the question of comparing it with other localities outside the walls and in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and of enquiring whether there may not be some other spot which presents superior claims.

II. And we believe that there is, at least, one such spot. Just outside the present Damascus Gate, at the angle formed by the two main roads, the one from south to north, and the other from west to east, there stands a low hillock of remarkable appearance and shape. This is the mound which many people, myself amongst the number, now believe to be the true and original Hill of Calvary. There are several reasons for this belief, which I propose to briefly discuss.

(1.) El Heidemîyeh, as the knoll outside the Damascus Gate is called, is known by the Jews of the present day as the "Hill of

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Execution." I have spoken with many learned Rabbis and Jews in Jerusalem, as well as with others who are capable of speaking with authority on the matter; and the testimony which I have received upon this point has been absolutely unanimous. There can be no doubt whatever that, according to Jewish tradition at least, the hill in question is regarded as having been that whereon criminals were put to death. It is called in the Talmud "Beth Ha-Sekilah," or the "House of Stoning;" and here can be seen the very place where the condemned were stoned to death. The actual form of execution, by the way, was different from that commonly represented in pictures. On one side of the hill, the cliff has been quarried into a perpendicular precipice, from twelve to fifty feet in height, a little to the east of the enormous natural cavern, which is known by the name of "Jeremiah's Grotto." The criminal was taken to the summit of the mound immediately over the perpendicular precipice; and one of the witnesses, upon whose testimony he had been condemned to death, pushed him over the cliff. In many cases, he would be killed by the fall; but if the witnesses, looking over the precipice, saw any signs of life yet remaining in the mangled form lying beneath them, they proceeded to hurl or drop large stones upon him, until he was pounded to death. It was at this spot and in this manner that Stephen, without doubt, met his death; and in the vicinity have been discovered the remains of an early Christian Church, to which the Latins have given the name of the "Church of St. Stephen."

(2.) The *Beth Ha-Sekilah*, or Place of Stoning, was also the recognized place of Crucifixion. This is distinctly stated in the Mishna;* and it has a most important bearing upon the question which we are now discussing. For it is in the highest degree improbable that there would have been *two* places of execution at Jerusalem, and this *primâ facie* improbability is confirmed by the testimony here rendered by the Mishna. The Hill of Execution was an accursed spot; and one such place would be enough for the Jews.

(3.) This mound, El Heidemîyeh, is accounted by the Jews as ill-fated and accursed. It stands in desolate loneliness, a solitary, barren, deserted spot, in the midst of busy life. The natives dare not pass it by night, for it bears the reputation of being haunted. The Jew spits in its direction as he passes near it, and mutters to himself the accustomed curse. If the information

* Sanhed. iv. 4.

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which I received from an ancient Rabbi at Jerusalem be correct, the very words of this curse appear to settle the question. "Cursed be he who brought ruin upon our nation, by aspiring to be the King thereof." This, so the Rabbi told me, is the formula generally employed; and can anything be more suggestive? Jesus of Nazareth was crucified because He said, "I am the King of the Jews;" and the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the nation are, even by the Jews themselves, connected with that claim. There can be scarcely any doubt that "He who brought ruin upon our nation, by aspiring to be the King thereof," refers to Jesus; and thus, in a highly remarkable manner, we can trace the connection between His Crucifixion and the hill outside the Damascus Gate.

(4.) Golgotha, where our Lord was crucified, was called the "Place of the Skull." Opinions differ as to the meaning of this phrase. Some consider that it referred to the shape of the hill; others that it signified that the locality was a burial-ground. To either of these two interpretations the hill which we are considering wonderfully corresponds. A plaster model of the mound has been made by a German sculptor at Jerusalem, from exact measurements most carefully taken. I have the model in my possession at the present moment; and no one can look at it in the most casual manner without being struck by its remarkable form. The crest of the hill is distinctly skull-shaped! Moreover, the place is now a cemetery, as it has been from time immemorial. It is at present used as a burial-ground for the Moslems; and there is no reason to doubt that it was anciently a Jewish one. Indeed, as we shall presently see, rock-cut Jewish tombs abound in its sides; and therefore we may almost without hesitation affirm that it was in the time of Christ the "place of a skull," in the sense of being a burying-ground.

(5.) Whatever may be said with regard to the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the hill of El Heidemîyeh was most certainly outside the walls of the city, in the time of Jesus Christ. The archway of the ancient Damascus Gate still remains, and can be clearly seen, close to, but at a lower level than, the present gate of the same name. The old guard-house of that gateway is also in existence; and about the position of the walls at this point there is no difference of opinion whatever.

(6.) We have already referred to the fact that the hill stands at the angle formed by the junction of the two main roads. The one which passes out of the Damascus Gate and runs northward

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towards Samaria, Galilee, and Syria, passes close to the western base of the hill; whilst the other, which connects the Mediterranean on the west with the Jordan on the east, skirts the same hill to the south. Thus, one hanging on a cross upon the summit of the hill would be exposed to the full gaze of all the passers-by. "And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads." * If we suppose the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to have been outside the walls, it must at any rate have been in a confined, narrow, out-of-the-way corner, where there could have been no casual passers-by. Even the advocates of its claims are prepared, I believe, to admit this fact. And this point, taken in combination with the other arguments, is not without decided importance.

(7.) Lastly, in the precincts of the Convent of the Sisters of Zion, adjoining the well-known *Ecce Homo Arch*, there lies exposed to view a Roman tesselated pavement. This has, not without great show of reason, been identified as being a portion of the original "Gabbatha," or pavement of the Prætorium, where Pilate condemned Christ to be crucified, and whence He was led forth to the place of execution. Now this pavement points unmistakably in the direction of the Damascus Gate, and is nearly at right angles to the so-called "Via Dolorosa," which leads to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

All these circumstances, when considered as accumulative evidence, seem to warrant us in holding a strong belief in favour of the hill above Jeremiah's Grotto as the true site of Calvary. And here let me say one word in defence of those who incline to this opinion. I have been scornfully told, by more than one adherent to the claims of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, that this new-fangled notion is merely an outcome of a Protestant desire to overthrow all the cherished traditions of the Catholic Church. This I emphatically and indignantly deny. Speaking for myself individually, I assert that no such feeling as this has any weight whatever in my mind. And I think that I can say the same for many others, who have been convinced of the superior claims of El Heidemîyeh. The question is not one in any way of Catholicism *v.* Protestantism, but simply and purely one of evidence of fact. Setting aside all prejudice, bias, and preconceived ideas, I maintain that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre fails to satisfy the impartial investigators as to its claims to occupy the site of Calvary; and I feel sure that, sooner or later, the barren

* St. Matt. xxvii. 39.

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and mournful hill beyond the Gate of Damascus will be generally regarded as the real scene of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

And, if sentiment be allowed to enter into the question, I must confess that I never climb that skull-shaped hill, and survey the scene from its rounded crest, without being moved by the deepest feelings of reverence, devotion, and solemnity. It seems a theatre so appropriate for the Drama of Earth's Redemption, a very ideal spot for the Crucifixion of the Son of God! And one thought above all others invariably takes possession of my mind, as I stand there, close beside the sacred ground where the Cross most probably was fixed. That thought is this: As Christ Jesus hung upon the Cross, with His face towards the south—as from the position of the ground must almost certainly have been the case—Gethsemane, the Judgment Hall, the High Priest's Palace, and, in a word, every scene which could have recalled His Passion, would have been hidden from His view. But one prominent object is full in sight, and the eye is instinctively attracted by it; that object is the summit of the Mount of Olives. From that summit, He was to ascend to His Father's Home on high, when through the grave and gate of death, He had risen to life eternal. Thus, even in the last throes of His mortal agony, He would be supported by His crowning triumph, the very scene of which was before his eyes; and, in literal, sober truth the Apostle's words were true, "For the joy *that was set before Him* He endured the Cross, despising the shame." *

How infinitely more solemn and sacred are the feelings aroused by such a scene and such thoughts as these, than those which one experiences in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, when one enquires for the position of Calvary!

"Turn to the right, go upstairs, and you will find Calvary on the first floor." These were the directions given to me at my first visit, and they were literally and truly correct!

III. Hitherto we have confined our attention to the scene of the Crucifixion, and we have endeavoured to demonstrate the arguments in favour of the

"Green hill, far away,
Outside the city wall."

We now proceed to consider the Tomb of Christ; and here we shall find our theory corroborated in a most remarkable and convincing manner. At the western base of the hill, which I believe

* Heb. xii. 2.

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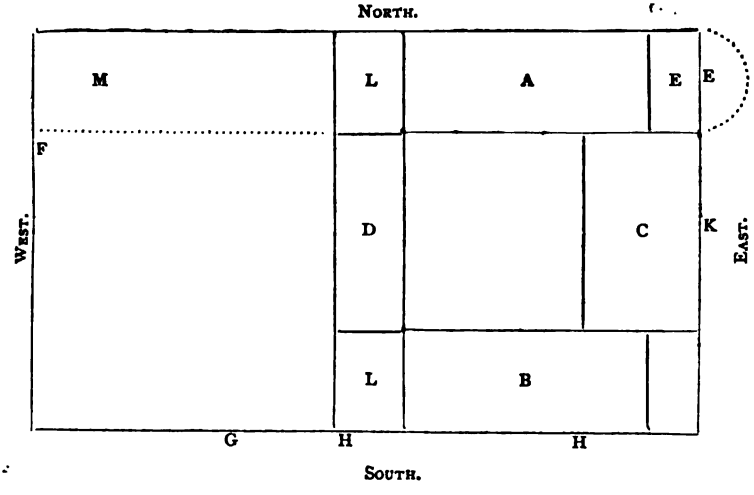
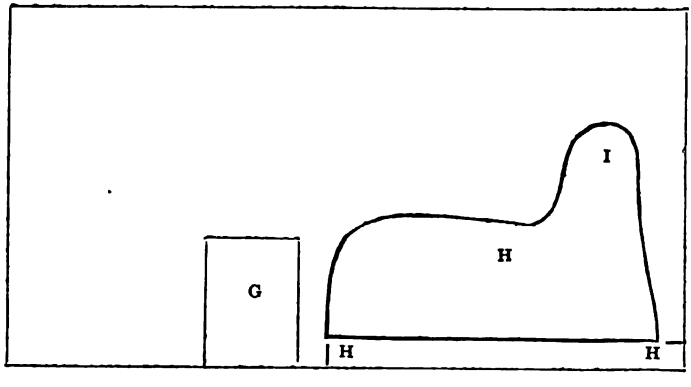
to be Calvary, there has, within the last few years, been discovered a rock-cut tomb. It stands in a garden almost within a stone's-throw of the summit of the mound; and for many centuries it has been completely concealed from view, by the accretions of earth and soil which had overlaid it. The best way to approach it is

GROUND PLAN OF INTERIOR.



ELEVATION OF FRONT (SOUTH).



this. You proceed about fifty yards along the Damascus road, then turn off to the right up a narrow lane, with a newly-built wall on your left hand. A short distance up this lane, an arched gateway is seen on the right-hand side. You push open the wooden door, which is never fastened, and you find yourself

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within the garden. At the northern end of this garden is the rock-cut tomb; and, after the most painstaking research and investigation, I have come to the conclusion that there can be said to be actually not a link missing in the chain of evidence which connects this tomb with the Sepulchre of Christ.

(I.) *The tomb was never finished.* From the accompanying ground-plan of the interior it will be seen that the original design of the tomb was almost a double-square, with a low partition (D) in the middle. This partition is about a foot high in the middle, but more than double that height at the two ends (L). The left-hand chamber appears at first sight to haye been intended merely to serve as a sort of ante-chamber to that on the right; for the three walls are perfectly smooth. But on examining the West wall, a vertical groove is seen to have been commenced at F, extending about two feet high from the ground. This proves that there was originally intended to be a receptacle for a body at M, as at A and B (see below). No doubt, if the tomb had been completed, there would also have been a fourth receptacle on the South side of the West Chamber, corresponding to B in the East. We see, therefore, that so far as the West Chamber was concerned, the work was left in a very unfinished condition. Turning our attention now to the East Chamber, our first impression on entering the tomb would doubtless be that here are three *loculi*, or receptacles, namely two full-sized ones at A and B, and a smaller one at C. On further examination, however, we shall find that C could never have been intended for a *loculus* at all, and that B has certainly never been finished or used. Thus, one and *one only loculus* has ever been finished, viz. that at A; and this has evidently been employed as a receptacle for a dead body. My reason for making this distinction between A and B is this. In the East wall, at the lower part of the *loculus*, a hollow space has been excavated, technically known as the "head-cavity," because, at the time of interment, the body was deposited in the receptacle, in such a manner that the head rested within this cavity, and was thus sheltered, as it were, by the overhanging rock. This "head cavity" at E is of the utmost importance in its connection with the evidence as to the resurrection of Christ, as we shall presently see. The receptacle (B) has no head-cavity; thus showing that it was never completed. Hence we have, in a large rock-cut tomb, intended for at least *four* bodies, one and one only receptacle finished, and that one has been once occupied. I have examined many hundreds of rock-cut tombs in Syria and

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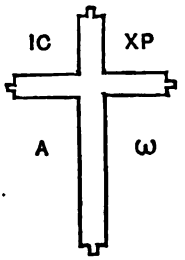
Palestine; and I may say that this is the *only* tomb which I have ever seen which was never completed, and yet has been occupied!

(2.) *The tomb was hewn at or about the time of Christ.* After a little experience in Syrian rock-sepulchres, one is able to determine, without difficulty and with a considerable degree of accuracy, the period at which any particular tomb was excavated. Thus, we can tell at once whether it was Phœnician or Canaanitish, Early Hebrew, of the times of the Kings, Herodian, or Christian. And this tomb is certainly of the period known as Herodian. That is to say, it was constructed during the time of the Herods; or, in other words, about the time of Christ.

(3.) *It was intended for Jewish occupants.* This is proved by the fact of the "head-cavity" being turned towards the East. Jews were buried with their heads at the East; Christians with their feet in that direction. Moreover, Christian rock-cut tombs invariably have a cross, either embossed in alto-relievo, or carved in bas-relief. This tomb has no such cross, and therefore it cannot be, as some have imagined, an Early Christian grave.

(4.) Although intended for Jewish occupants, it was employed for the interment of some one *who was worshipped and revered by the Early Christians.* A close inspection reveals the fact that the tomb has been used as a place of Christian worship, and has, in fact, been a Christian Chapel.

The receptacle (C), which might at first be mistaken for a child's grave, is seen upon examination to have been an *altar!* And immediately above it, on the face of the East wall, at (K), nearly effaced unfortunately by time and weather, but still clearly traceable upon careful investigation, is a highly remarkable and significant fresco. It is painted with pigments similar to those at Pompeii, and bearing evident marks of an antiquity reaching to the earlier centuries of the Christian era. The fresco bears the following character:—



And it may almost be said to speak for itself. What explana-

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tion can be offered for the marvellous fact of a Jewish tomb being used as a Christian sanctuary, for the celebration of the most sacred Christian rites in the early ages of Christianity, with the Cross itself and the sacred monograms inscribed upon its walls, except that Christ Himself was buried here?

(5.) But this is by no means all. On the other side of the narrow lane by which we approached the garden with this rock-cut tomb in it, we pass through another doorway into an enclosure which now belongs to the Latins. Here are the ruined remains to which I have already alluded, called by the Latins the Church of St. Stephen; and here, too, is the entrance to another series of rock-cut tombs. These are all, undoubtedly, Christian; for the sunken or embossed cross is to be seen on every one. Now, these Christian tombs extend underground, beneath the narrow lane; and careful measurements have revealed the fact that they adjoin the tomb which we are now discussing on the north and west sides. There is, in fact, scarcely more than a foot's breadth of solid rock between these tombs and what I have called the Tomb of Christ. This, again, is a matter of deep significance; for it shows that the Early Christians, for some reason of their own, encompassed this tomb with their own sepulchres. In these Christian tombs were found two memorial stones, which almost appear to settle the question. Upon one of these stones, which was broken and nearly illegible, were nevertheless deciphered the following words in Greek: "Buried near his Lord." The other, which is in good preservation, contains this inscription: "To Nonus and Onesimus, Deacons of the Church of the Witness of the Resurrection of Christ."

Here, then, were buried at least two deacons of a Church erected to be a witness of the Resurrection of Christ. And is it too much to conclude that the very church, the remains of which still exist upon the spot, called by the Latins the Church of St. Stephen, is the Church of the Witness of our Lord's Resurrection, which is referred to in the memorial tablet to Nonus and Onesimus? And even if this be not the church, there is another close at hand. For, in the very garden where the rock-cut sepulchre stands, excavations made last year have brought to light the foundations of a building, which, so far as can at present be ascertained, appears to have been a Christian church. Indeed, the whole neighbourhood surrounding the tomb has clearly been appropriated by the Early Christians, as a sanctuary of the most holy import, connected with the Resurrection of Christ.

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Taking into consideration this marvellous concatenation of undesigned evidences, it does not appear too bold an assumption to make, when we pronounce our verdict without hesitation in favour of the claims of this hallowed spot.

And does it not seem a providentially wise and beautiful thing that, whilst for century upon century human passions of the worst kinds have been raging around the traditional Calvary and Tomb of Christ; whilst human blood has been shed profusely in disputes concerning the supposed shrine of Christendom; whilst in connection with the so-called Holy Sepulchre every sort of insult and blasphemy to the Holy Jesus has been perpetrated in the Name of Jesus Himself; there, all the while, unknown and unsuspected by man, yet seen by angels and guarded by God, has been the true Calvary and the true Sepulchre of Christ, undesecrated, unpolluted by human quarrels, human bloodshed, and human superstition? And may there not be some pregnant reason, which is at present beyond our view, that now at last, after more than eighteen centuries of hidden retirement, the truth has been revealed? We are constantly hearing of the "signs of the times;" who can tell whether this may not be one of them? In any case, we devoutly hope and pray that these newly discovered sites may be reverently protected from such distressing and heart-rending associations as have gathered around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. On the other hand, we would strenuously insist that, even on the bare possibility of the rock-cut tomb which I have just described being the very sepulchre of our Lord and Saviour, every effort should be made to preserve it from desecration, to keep it clean and orderly within and without, and to show to the Mohammedan and Jewish world that we have some reverence for the Author of our Faith. The tomb and garden have been purchased by Herr Frutiger, the German banker at Jerusalem; and, in his hands, we may be sure that they are safe from superstition. But much remains to be desired upon the score of cleanliness and decency; and it would be well if a fund could be provided for the maintenance of a trustworthy guardian, whose office it should be to look after the tomb. We presume that in such an event no objection would be offered by Herr Frutiger himself, who, if we mistake not, is a firm believer in the identity of this holy site.

IV. There remains one practical thought in conclusion; and it is a very practical one indeed. As will be seen by a reference to the elevation of the South front of the Tomb, there are two

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openings in the face. The one (G) is a regular doorway, low in height, but of the same character as the entrances to most rock-cut tombs. This appears to have been made at a date subsequent to the first occupation of the tomb, and was probably constructed when the sepulchre was transformed into a Christian Chapel. The other opening (H) is rough and irregular ; and supplies a remarkable evidence of the sudden way in which the tomb was left unfinished. It corroborates the theory that, for some reason—and that, probably, the interment of the one body which had been buried there,—the completion of the tomb was hastily abandoned.

There is one particular feature in connection with this opening, to which special attention deserves to be called. This is the curious portion of the opening at (I). It supplies, as it appears to us, an explanation of the narrative given by St. John of his visit to the Holy Sepulchre on the first Easter morning ; and, if our theory be correct, we have here one of the most remarkable corroborations of the truth of the Gospel story which has, perhaps, been ever exhibited. The account is as follows :

"He stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying ; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed."

We observe here that St. John says that stooping down (or forward), from the outside of the tomb, he saw the linen clothes lying. The body of Christ was deposited in the *loculus*, or receptacle (A)—we are assuming that our theory regarding this tomb is correct—towards sunset on Good Friday. Under ordinary circumstances, a large stone slab would have been laid along the top of the receptacle, and so would have concealed the body from view. But we know that the interment was perforce accomplished hurriedly ; and, the slab not being ready (for the tomb was not completed), the Body was merely laid in the *loculus*, with the linen winding-sheet wrapped about it, the head being laid within the head-cavity (E), a turban or head-cloth being folded around it. The large stone was rolled against the opening (H), and this had been removed when St. John arrived. Now, he tells us that by stooping down, he was able to see the linen clothes or winding-sheet lying in the receptacle. Owing to the remarkable opening at (I) in the face of this tomb, I, together

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with others, have been able to test this statement. In no ordinary tomb would it have been possible to see from outside to the bottom of a *loculus*. But in this tomb, by leaning forwards, and peering through the opening at (I), one can see quite clearly to the very bottom of the receptacle (A).

St. John saw the linen clothes lying, but did not venture in; because, from the appearance of the winding-sheet, he thought that the dead Body was still there, and that the women had been mistaken. When his companion, St. Peter, arrived, however, he followed him into the interior of the tomb. What he then saw convinced him that Christ was risen from the dead. "He saw and believed." This sentence must be studiously observed. It was on account of the spectacle that met his eye, that he believed in the resurrection of Christ. What was that spectacle? He "seeth the linen clothes lie; and the napkin, that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself." Now, the idea which most people entertain with regard to this account is that St. John and St. Peter saw the body-clothes lying neatly folded up in one place, and the head-cloth, equally neatly folded up, deposited in some other spot. But there would have been nothing in this to induce them to believe that Christ was risen from the dead. Any one who had carried off the Body might have arranged the linen clothes in this manner. What then did they see? They saw the linen winding-sheet which had enfolded the Body still lying undisturbed in the exact place and the exact position, at the bottom of the *loculus*, as it had been when the Body of Jesus had been interred. They saw the head-cloth, or turban, "in a place by itself," that is to say, in the "head-cavity" where the head of Jesus had lain, still retaining its folds—"wrapped together,"—as if it encircled the head. But, *though the winding-sheet and the head-cloth had been absolutely undisturbed, the Body itself was gone!* In other words, that same Body, which afterwards passed through walls and closed doors, had passed through its linen cerements without disarranging them; thus proving to the spectators on that Easter morn that, beyond all cavilling or dispute, their Lord had risen from the dead!

HASKETT SMITH.

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ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS,

AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY."

PART II.—CHAPTER I.

"WELL, Dr. Winter? When may I wish you joy?"

"Never, I fear, Mrs. Conolly, unless you can find me some ally more powerful than my own merits."

"Pooh, Doctor! I believe you do not press the lady sufficiently."

"I own, madam, I see little satisfaction or diplomacy in forcing her to the point-blank 'No.'"

"Faint heart never won fair lady, sir."

The speakers stood in the lane just outside the Miss Vanhomrighs' house at Cellbridge, in the county of Dublin. One a Roman matron in the hood and kerchief of a Georgian lady, the other a divine not much past thirty with an intelligent face and the air of a gentleman.

"'Tis the fair lady's purse, not herself, makes my heart faint," said the young man. "Besides, the very sincerity of my attachment, which has been long a-growing, will not allow me to talk of flames and ardours, like a young fellow who has fallen in love with a mask at a ball. Could I but persuade some friend who has influence with Miss Vanhomrigh to tell her how much I am above sordid motives, how much less cold are my feelings than they appear—Madam, will you not be my friend?"

Mrs. Conolly paused before she answered.

"Dear, Dr. Winter, you will smile if I say I dare not, yet 'tis the truth. You know how greatly I have this match at heart, and how truly I esteem and like Miss Vanhomrigh; yet I feel there's a certain point in our intimacy which I reached three or four years since, and beyond which I cannot get. There's as it were a locked door in the way; I have not the key to it, and fear should I force it on your behalf, the consequences would be more unhappy to you than to me."

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"Madam," returned Dr. Winter, "I must bow to your decision. There's but one other friend Miss Vanhomrigh and I have in common, who may be able to do me this service. I mean the Dean of St. Patrick's."

Mrs. Conolly looked at the young man with a somewhat comical expression, which however he was too absorbed in his own reflections to observe.

"I believe there is nothing would advantage you so greatly, sir, if you could persuade him to undertake as much for you. Yet I own I should tremble—I will not often confess to fearing the Dean, who ought not to be flattered by a too visible awe—yet, between ourselves, I should tremble—"

Dr. Winter smiled superior.

"Oh, madam, I am not one of those that are frightened of the Dean. I have never truckled to him nor had occasion to complain of disrespect from him; quite the contrary. I have ever found him the most considerate as he is the wittiest and most agreeable of companions. There's no man living I admire so much as the Dean of St. Patrick's."

"Then you are all in the fashion," returned Mrs. Conolly. "I remember well when he came back to Dublin seven or eight years ago—or whenever it was that the late Queen died—I was resolved to like him because 'twas the fashion to do quite the contrary. Why, he could not take his ride on the strand but he must be hustled by unmannerly fellows of quality, and 'twas reckoned the best breeding in the world for his old acquaintances to stare at him as though he were newly arrived from China if he ventured to address 'em in the street."

"Madam, you amaze me," cried Dr. Winter with warmth. "I have heard something of the kind before, yet I never cease to be amazed at it. I am glad I was absent from Dublin at the time, as their treatment of this great man would have filled me with an incurable disgust to its inhabitants."

"Matters are now so much altered for the better," continued Mrs. Conolly, "that I'll confess to you I myself have never been able to determine whether he is charming or odious."

Dr. Winter exclaimed.

"I cannot hinder it, Doctor. Say I go to bed o' Monday at rest in the conviction that I cannot suffer him, I am certain to meet him before Sunday and be forced to adore him. It must be owned that, whatever his faults, he is the least wearisome of mortals."

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He hath as much variety in his talents and disposition as four commoner men put together," cried the enthusiastic young divine, "and 'tis greatly to be wished that Providence could grant him four times the usual length of life, for in the short space of three-score years and ten 'tis impossible that he should do justice to all his qualities."

Mrs. Conolly tapped him with her fan and laughed.

"My stars, Doctor, you alarm me! I believe you and some other fiery young fellows will be proclaiming Jonathan King of Ireland, and down with King George, presently. I'll bid you farewell before I must hear treason. Farewell, and good luck to your wooing."

She reached him her hand, which he kissed gallantly, and the two went their respective ways; Dr. Winter to the inn where his horse was stabled, Mrs. Conolly to a door in the high wall which marked the limit of the Miss Vanhomrighs' domain.

She entered their house unannounced, a privileged guest, and finding no one in the book-room where the Miss Vanhomrighs commonly sat, proceeded to the dining-parlour. Miss Anna Stone stood there, bent double over a table and absorbed in composing some garment from sundry fragments of tawdry silk picked up at an auction in Dublin. Mr. Stone had lately been a loser in one of the bubble companies of the day; for the commercial spirit which was making the British Empire while politicians strutted on their petty stage, was already a tricksy as well as a powerful sprite. Mr. Stone had consequently given up his London house and was waiting for a country living that must shortly be vacant. Meantime, Miss Stone was homeless, for her sister was one of those not uncommon people who conceive marriage to imply a complete absolution from the duties of kinship and friendship: so Anna bethought herself of her cousins in Ireland. There were several families of these, but somehow wherever else she was invited she always drifted back to Cellbridge again before long.

She returned Mrs. Conolly's greeting hurriedly, as one interrupted in an absorbing occupation.

"You will find my cousins in the garden-parlour, madam," she said, speaking with one side of her mouth only, because she held a pin in the other, and pointing with a large pair of scissors to a door on the opposite side of the room to that on which Mrs. Conolly had entered.

"Pray tell me, miss," asked Mrs. Conolly gravely, "how does

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Miss Molly do? Do you see a great change in her since you was last here?"

Miss Stone, who had now accumulated three pins in her mouth and was contemplating her work with her head on one side, took them out severally and inserted them to her satisfaction before she answered.

"Change, madam? Lord, yes. I thank God I am not as blind as a bat; I was never like some folks, lacking in observation. You'll excuse me, I beg, madam, for continuing my work. We that have lost our fortunes cannot afford fine manners."

"I beg you'll be easy and not inconvenience yourself, madam,' returned Mrs. Conolly. "Do you think our excellent Miss Molly very sick?"

"Oh, she's not long for this world!" returned Miss Stone, cutting basting threads and whisking them out through the crackling silk. "I could see *that* so soon as I was back; I've a wonderful quick eye for illness. I should say she'd not last longer than—than old New Year's Day or thereabouts, and 'tis strange how seldom I am wrong in my forecasts. Some are too hopeful and some too apt to give folks up, but over and over again has it happened that sick persons have taken the turn for the better or died on the very days I have prophesied it of 'em. Yes, sure, Cousin is very sadly, for if you'll believe it she'll not endure as much noise as the pulling out of a thread in her neighbourhood, or I would be glad to keep her company while I worked. But I know not how to be idle. I am one of those that must always be doing."

"Does Miss Vanhomrigh think so ill of her sister's health?" asked Mrs. Conolly.

Miss Stone shrugged her shoulders.

"Cousin Vanhomrigh's a strange girl—strange woman, I should say, as you must very well know, madam. She talks as though her sister was as like to live as you or I. 'When Moll is better we shall do this and that,' says she. For my part I call it downright heathenish not to prepare for death; but I've done my duty in calling her attention to her sister's state and can do no more. Last night when Cousin Mary was dozing there was a winding-sheet on the candle just over against her; so I pointed it out to Cousin Vanhomrigh, and I assure you she was most uncivil. 'Tis not every one could live friendly in this house, but 'tis ever *my* device to bear and forbear."

Mrs. Conolly, who saw she had learned as much from Miss

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Stone as she was likely to learn, passed into the garden-parlour. This was a small room with a glass door opening on to a stone terrace. The door was shut and Molly's couch was drawn up to near the fire. Her eyes were closed and in that state of repose the worn and deathly aspect of her face was startlingly visible, whereas when she spoke or smiled it was disguised by the animation of her look. Her sister sat on a low stool before the hearth, with her elbow on her knee and her chin on her hand. A book lay open before her, but she was staring into the fire. A dish of oranges and a coffee-pot stood on a table near. Both young women were absorbed in their own thoughts and did not hear Mrs. Conolly as she opened the door and came softly round the screen that half enclosed them. She paused; perhaps even she, robust as she was in mind and body, was momentarily affected by something ominous and melancholy in the silence that brooded over this pair of sisters. Molly perceived her before she spoke, and sat up to greet her with out-stretched hands and the charming smile that together with her bright eyes, was all that now remained of the gay loveliness of her early youth. Esther *too* rose and greeted her courteously, but with a listlessness that looked like coldness.

"I trust this change of the weather has got the better of Miss Molly's cough," said Mrs. Conolly, holding Molly's hand and looking at her sister.

"Of course it has, madam," returned Esther hastily, almost sharply. "I knew she would be sadly, so long as that bitter north-east wind blew; there's very few that do not feel the ill effects of it. She's a world easier now 'tis gone, and begins to think of growing strong and hearty before the summer."

Molly put her hands up to her ears, and in doing so, threw back her sleeve-ruffles, showing arms no larger than a child's.

"Pray now, ladies, pinch me when you have done talking of me," she cried with a pout, "or when you have found something diverting to say about me. But that's impossible. I've not even a new ailment, and my own grandmother, were she alive, would be tired of talking of my old ones before now. O that I should be condemned thus early to prove the most insipid theme for my neighbours' discourses of any woman in Dublin, that's under eighty! But 'tis even so. Tell me, Mrs. Conolly, when will your new house be ready for dancing in? I hear 'tis a vast deal finer than the Castle."

So they began to talk of the palace Mr. Conolly was building

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for himself at the other end of the village, Molly out of breath but not out of spirits, and Esther with her grave preoccupied air, talking with more determination than interest, to save her sister's voice. But the other thoughts that had been in her mind as she sat and stared at the fire were there still. After a time Mrs. Conolly found a convenient opportunity for speaking of Doctor Winter, whose taste she said she was consulting in the planting of her garden and grounds.

"I believe he has helped you in designing your beech-grove, Miss Vanhomrigh," she continued, "and a mighty pleasant one it will be when all of us are dead and buried. Pray now consult him about the planting of your laurels."

"O madam," cried Esther, tossing her chin defiantly, "I love my laurels, and I love to plant 'em with my own hands just when and where I please."

"I hope, miss, you are not cruel to Doctor Winter. He is a very ingenious and learned young gentleman, and besides extremely well-bred. I think you should be proud to be highly esteemed by him."

"We are proud," murmured Molly. "I in particular, madam, am exceedingly proud of Doctor Winter's attentions."

"Molly!" cried Esther, and blushed; then continued—"Indeed, madam, we are proud of Doctor Winter's friendship, but 'tis not at all of the nature you perhaps suppose, or that mischievous brat there would make you suppose. When we first knew him, he was very desirous to be presented to the Dean of St. Patrick's, and we did him that service, for which he has ever been grateful. He appears to me to have shown a very superior understanding in conceiving so great an opinion of the Dean, at a time when the world was using him even more scurvily than is its custom. Doctor Winter shows himself above the common herd by adoring genius, which 'tis well known they detest. That alone would make us esteem him, and while Moll has been so very sick, he has been in a manner domestic here, reading and talking to her both pleasantly and comfortingly. For without being an enthusiast, madam, he is a truly pious man."

"You perceive now, madam," said Molly, "the reason of my sickness lasting such an intolerably long time. 'Tis as plain as a pikestaff."

Mrs. Conolly, thinking she had done all she could for Dr. Winter, turned the conversation to other subjects, and presently went home in the falling twilight.

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There was silence again when she had left, Molly lying back exhausted and Esther pacing the room restlessly, her erect figure darkening more and more as it passed between Molly and the light, till it was merely a silhouette against the outer twilight, except when a red tongue of flame leapt up from the logs on the hearth.

At length, clasping her hands behind her head, she began to speak in her low rich voice, sometimes raised in indignant protest, sometimes broken by despair.

"This is the seventh day, Molkin. How many more am I to wear away in vain expectation, waiting for one that loved us once, and now thinks not, cares not whether you or I be dead or living? I told him I would not be so unreasonable as to expect him to a day, but seven days!—O, I believe I could better have endured to have passed them on the rack than as I have done; sighing for the night that suspense might be over, and all night sighing for the morning that I might be able to expect him again. Yet when he comes I shall not dare to chide. Once I should have dared; I used to chide him for all his faults. Has he grown more awful, think you Moll, since then? Or I a very abject? I can write and upbraid him—I will do so at once—but at the hour when he should receive my letter I am shivering at the thought of his frown."

"Essie," said Moll, shading her eyes with her hand, "consider that person in the next room."

Esther, who happened to be near the door of communication, opened and shut it again abruptly.

"Anna has gone, she and her mantua."

"Thank God, and would 'twere further!" ejaculated Molly, and Esther resumed her pacing.

"Ten weeks!" she broke out again. "Ten weeks since I saw the only valuable creature the world contains for me excepting yourself. Ten weeks, and in all that time but one letter and one note. Tell me, Moll, what means this strange, this prodigious neglect of—of her he once—O, Moll, for pity's sake tell me what can it mean?"

"Come hither, my dearest Hess," said Molly, "come close. I cannot speak so loud."

Esther threw herself on her knees by Molly's long chair. Molly took hold of her sister with her little, thin, transparent hands, and looked at her with a long gaze of infinite pain and compassion, such as a mother might have bestowed upon a

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child. When she began to speak it was firmly, though she shivered with physical weakness and nervous anxiety as to the effect of what she had to say.

"There is something I have long wished to say to you, Essie, but did I not sometimes think I have not much more time in which to be talking, I should go on fearing to say it. If 'tis too cruel, will you promise to forgive me before I die, even though that should be to-morrow?"

"Hush, Moll—you *will* die if you give yourself up. I shall die first."

Indeed she looked very ill. Molly smiled a little. "You will need to hasten, if you would trip up *my* heels, Hess. Do you promise what I asked?"

"I cannot bear you to give way to such thoughts, but I promise a thousand times over."

"You ask me if I can guess the meaning of the Dean's neglect of you," continued Molly. "If you intended me to invent a plausible excuse for it, I have no longer wit to do't. But, O Essie, my dear, I have long ago thought of a good reason for his behaviour, and so I believe have you."

"What do you mean?" asked Esther faintly.

"Have you never mentioned Mrs. Johnson to him, Hess?"

Essy was silent a minute and then answered with a certain stubbornness of manner:

"Five or six years since in Dublin I spoke to him of Mrs. Johnson, being weary of listening to the chatter of the disagreeable prying people 'twas our misfortune to be thrown amongst, without knowing the truth of the matter. He—he was terribly angry at my having heard all this tattle and mentioning it to him. He said he would explain to me once and for all Mrs. Johnson's claims on him; how that she had been his ward in all but the lawyer's sense, ever since she was a child, and had the claim of a ward and almost a younger sister upon him. He said she was very elegant and accomplished and accustomed to be treated like a lady by persons of quality, but that her family were but servants in the household of the Temples, and therefore he had thought it possible to extend to her an honourable protection, such as should keep her in the sphere of life to which Sir William had accustomed her, without its being thought he would marry her. Which he repeatedly assured me he had never proposed to do. 'Tis well known there's an elderly woman lives with her, and he assures me he

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never visits her except when she is in the company of this Mrs. Dingley, out of regard to her reputation and because he is accustomed to the society of both. This is all about Mrs. Johnson."

"If this be all, for what possible reason did he keep the very existence of one so intimately connected with him a secret from us, to whom he was wont to talk openly enough of his other friends? And, pray, Essie, why has he never introduced to us, to us who delight to honour those he loves, this lady whom he treats as a sister?"

"You might know him well enough by this time, Moll, to give up demanding reasons for his whimsical secrecies. Enough that he hates to talk of his private affairs. And Mrs. Johnson is not, as you must be aware, received by the better families in Dublin, that is where there are ladies."

"And what is the cause of that?" asked Molly with some indignation. "Her low birth, you would say, but I tell you there's yet another, and that is the Dean himself. 'Tis he has caused the world to look on her askance."

"You accuse him then of a base intrigue!" cried Essie fiercely, her cheeks and eyes blazing with wrath.

"I do not," returned Molly, sitting up and speaking with unusual strength and energy. "I accuse him of—I hardly know what. Of being perhaps secretly married. The world says so, more and more openly of late."

"The world!" cried Essy scornfully. "And you, Molly, of all women living believe the world!"

"I do not say 'tis true, but it would explain much that has been singular in his conduct. You must admit too 'tis pretty odd that Mrs. Johnson receives his company for him at the Deanery on public days—and he has never allowed us to appear there on those days, though he at one time frequently declared that we were the only friends he possessed in Dublin. Why may we not see Mrs. Johnson?"

"I will own to you, Molly," said Esther, mastering her anger, but speaking with reluctance, "he admits Mrs. Johnson to be of a jealous disposition and averse to his forming intimate friendships with other persons of her sex."

"What right has he given her to control his intimacies? Tell me, Essie, dearest Essie, on your honour, do you believe Mrs. Johnson to have no claim that forbids his offering marriage to another woman?"

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"Why should he offer marriage?" returned Esther, as white as a sheet. "He considers friendship to conduce more to happiness."

"Friendship!" cried Molly. "I know well enough what friendship means, and value it too, but 'tis madness to call this attachment of yours friendship. Tell me, on your conscience, Essie, do you believe Mrs. Johnson has claims that prevent his offering to marry you?"

"I have sometimes hoped so—since we came to Ireland," replied Esther, covering her face.

"Hoped?" repeated Molly in amazement.

"Yes," continued Esther in a very low voice. "They say she is of an extremely weakly constitution—and should anything happen to her—why, then it might be that that supreme happiness which I cannot but desire would be granted to me!"

"Esther!" cried Molly, "can this indeed be you? You, that was all honour and generosity, all mercy and tenderness to every living creature, whether man or beast. Heavens, what a change is here! What a deadly change! O Essie, my dear, my honoured sister, 'tis not your little Molly speaks to you now; 'tis a woman who has suffered much and learned a little in this life, and who must very soon enter another. Think—how will you answer this to your Maker when you come to be in my situation?—How can you answer it now to your own heart? You *hope* to have been an instrument of wrong and suffering to another. You look eagerly for her death that your own happiness may be advanced. Shame, Essie, shame!"—and she paused breathless.

Esther sank lower and lower as her sister was speaking, till she was crouching on the ground with her face buried in Molly's draperies and the cushions of the couch. She did not answer immediately, and when she did so, it was in a strangled voice.

"Ay, 'tis easy to talk, to see 'tis wrong, but you don't understand. You don't know what it means to care as I do. 'Tis impossible I should feel otherwise. It may be wrong for a drowning man to clutch at one that's swimming, yet none blames him for doing it. 'Tis just as unavoidable for me to hope, to wish—*that*. You would if you was in my place, if you had suffered what I have suffered this ten years."

"Perhaps I might, no doubt I should, my dear; that does not

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make it any better. Essie, no good has come to you from the Dean, nor ever will. He's a good friend, and I love him dearly, but I love you far better, and I implore you when I am dead to leave this country and see him no more. Think of it. You have sense and must perceive 'tis your only right and wise course. Either he will not or he cannot marry you. Essie, I implore you, consider this matter and promise me to give him up. Promise me this, and I shall die in peace."

Esther still lay crouched upon the floor. Her shoulders heaved with a few deep sobs, and her hands were clasped convulsively.

"I would die for you, Molly," she said at length in a hoarse faint voice, "I would indeed. But I can't do that. You ask me what is impossible. I tell you I cannot."

Molly gave an exclamation of despair and leaning back on her couch closed her eyes.

"At least," she resumed, opening them, "you can promise me to learn the precise truth. That it is your duty to the Dean and Mrs. Johnson as well as yourself to know, and he must tell it you."

"I dare not ask him. You don't guess how angry he was that I should mention it that time years ago, and either I grow more cowardly or his displeasure more awful. Before we came to Ireland I most solemnly promised never to speak to him of marriage, and in Dublin I promised him never again to torment him on the score of Mrs. Johnson. I cannot break my word to him."

"Go to her herself then," returned Molly. "If she is his wife, one so intimate with him as Mr. Ford scruples not to hint, she'll not hide it from you, and she has no right to keep you from this knowledge. You can at least promise me to do your utmost to discover the truth."

"I would rather not promise anything, dear Molly," replied Esther humbly.

Molly turned her head aside on the cushion, and two tears stood on her cheeks.

"Then do not," she said. "Go your own way. You break my heart and make me glad to die."

Esther gave a cry and threw her arms round her sister.

"Moll, Moll, my own dear, what am I to do? What do you wish?—I'll promise you anything you will, except to give him up. I can't do that, Moll. I could sooner tear the heart out

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of my breast. Ah, you don't know. I'll promise you anything but that."

"Promise me then, Hess, to try earnestly to find out the truth about this matter of Mrs. Johnson, by any means that seem most convenient. I do not say at once, but when the occasion offers."

Esther was weeping bitterly with her head on her sister's shoulder.

"I dare not—I dare not," she said between her sobs.

There was a loud knock at the house-door, and she lifted her head to listen eagerly and wipe the tears from her eyes.

"No, it cannot be. It is too late," she said. Then starting up; "whom are you expecting? I can see no one."

And without waiting for an answer she fled from the room.

In a minute or two the man-servant entered and announced a gentleman to wait on Miss Mary. A quick firm step sounded across the floor, and some one coming through the fire-lit twilight grasped her hands in silence. A moment more and they were alone.

"Francis!" she cried, "I dared not hope it was you."

"Yet you wrote to me to come."

"Well, thank God you are come! I hardly thought you could reach Ireland so soon! Thank God you are here!"

And she sank down on her couch again.

"I started immediately on receiving your letter and had a fair wind all the voyage; and there's little to tempt a man to delay between this and Cork. I find the inns are still the scurviest in the world—you'd find better lying in an Indian wigwam."

CHAPTER II.

"I pity ye, Mrs. Biddy, sure I pity ye!"

And Patrick, shaking his head at the cook with an air of deep commiseration, set down his basin and other shaving apparatus sharply on the kitchen-dresser. Biddy looked round with open mouth and hand suspended in the act of basting a joint, somewhat inadequately, with a silver-gilt tea-spoon; for at the Deanery as elsewhere Saxon tyranny and prejudice, embodied in Mrs. Brent the housekeeper, the Dean and Mrs. Johnson, while preserving a semblance of order, was powerless to enslave the free Irish spirit.

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"Holy Mother, Mr. Patrick, whatever is the matter?"

"Only this, Cook, Jewel—and ye may believe me, for I niver tould a lie. If an angel from heaven was cooking that dinner—Faith, what am I saying of angels, when 'tis yourself I see before me?—But if 'twas the Apostle Paul, the Master 'd be afther calling it ruinated, and ballyrag before all the quality. Ah, Biddy darlint, ye may think ye've come to a bachelor family, where your iligant shape and purty manners (those were advantages with which Patrick persevered in crediting the cook of the moment under the most discouraging circumstances) 'll give you a gineral Absolution. That's not the way at all, at all. There's Brent that's the very mischief, and Mrs. Johnson I'll call by no such iligant name, but say she's the very Divil; and the Dean himself, poor man, that's got prying ways and knows very little what becomes his station. I've had hopes he'd better himself by a decent marriage wid one of the ould sthock"—here Patrick collapsed on to a stool and shook his head mournfully. "But I doubt 'tis all off. Tell me, Mrs. Biddy, was it Miss Vanhomrigh's gintleman brought the letter?"

"Faith, 'twas no gintleman at all," replied the untutored Biddy. "'Twas a little old footman in a green livery."

"That's him," returned Patrick. "Once on a time the Master 'd be in a mighty merry humour, when the old leprechaun in green had been here, but now—ah, 'tis just the other way. O Biddy, if only I could read, I might have foreseen this. But when I was in London, we gintlemen's gintlemen left larning to the clargy. Ah, I've come down in my notions, or as some might say have got sinse since then, and know a little larning is useful in my thrade. 'Tis mighty provoking now to think I've seen Miss Vanhomrigh's hand again and again this ten years, and couldn't make it out or even swear to't, though for all the Dean's hide-away tricks, I've looked at his letters from every corner of the paper. If I'd been a scholar, the divil's in it but I should have known in time this match was off, and all along of Mrs. Johnson, I doubt—bad luck to her!"

"Well, well, Mr. Patrick, if Mrs. Johnson *is* a bit troublesome of an afternoon, she don't come lampooning round of a morning, so I'd be in no hurry for the Master to bring a Mistress in, if I was you."

"Begorra, 'tis not me comfort, 'tis me dignity I'm considering, Mrs. Biddy," returned Patrick, sitting up; "Miss Vanhomrigh's a lady, I won't say she's such a lady as her mamma that was fit to

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be wife to a nobleman, but a lady she is. What's Mrs. Johnson? Her father a bailiff, they say, and her mother a housekeeper. 'Tisn't such thrash that I'd have put over me, nor over you, me dear, and if 'tweren't for the poor master, I'd go back to London by post. But there, though he's a bit touched," and Patrick pointed to his own head, "and bad enough when he's in his tantrums, he's a good ould sowl in his way, and he'd never get on widout me. Sure I'd never have the heart to leave him, poor crayture, just as he's disappointed of Miss Vanhomrigh. Bejapers, he tossed his head about over her letter this morning so 'twas small blame to him he got a skelp of the razor; I was in dread he'd be kilt meself."

Here there were voices outside which caused Patrick to start up and hurriedly seize his basin, and Biddy to thrust the tea-spoon up her sleeve, which served her as a pocket, and stare wildly round the kitchen in search of a humbler implement.

"Here, Cook, here's our share of the dinner," said Mrs. Johnson, bustling in with a large basket on her arm, followed by Mrs. Dingley similarly laden. "Why, Patrick, you have not got your livery on! Don't you know company's expected?"

Meantime the Dean was applying as well as he could some small pieces of plaster to the cuts bestowed on him by Patrick. He was clumsy and could not make the plaster stick; so there he stood muttering decorous curses before the shaving-glass in the upstairs room, which he used partly as a dressing-room and partly as a study, as being more private than his library. At a certain moment he became mentally conscious of the reflection in the glass, which he had before been staring into merely with a view to the arrangement of his strips of plaster. The elderly annoyed face seen thus close, its general impressiveness of outline and indefinable air of power and brilliancy lost in the details of line and wrinkle, was certainly not beautiful, nor even attractive. He saw that plainly enough, and a smile of bitter humour parted his lips, and broadened till it showed two rows of strong teeth, still white and regular.

"Upon my word, Chloe," he said, addressing a letter that lay open on the table before him, "I wish you joy of your Corydon. A prettier fellow never danced on the green, and I doubt not that in the days of Methuselah he would have been reckoned just of an age to begin taking his lessons in Love."

He took up the letter and began re-reading with pishes and pshaws of impatience; but as he continued he ceased to jeer

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either at the writer or at the image in the glass. He leaned back in his chair and sighed a sigh half of weariness, half of pain. It was only like the rest of her letters. A cry of passionate adoration, of passionate reproach and anguish.

"Don't flatter yourself," said the letter, "don't flatter yourself that separation will ever change my sentiments; for I find myself unquiet in the midst of silence, and my heart is at once pierced with sorrow and love. For Heaven's sake, tell me what has caused this prodigious change in you, which I have found of late! If you have the least remains of pity for me left, tell me tenderly. No: don't tell it so, that it may cause my present death, and don't suffer me to live a life like a languishing death, which is the only life I can lead, if you have lost any of your tenderness for me."

So it ended, and he sighed again and fell once more into the old train of thought. Yet as years went on the course of it had altered, at first imperceptibly, but now always more perceptibly. From the moment of Miss Vanhomrigh's arrival in Dublin he had been subject to fits of intense annoyance at her presence there, compounded of impatience at the passionate and exacting nature of her attachment to him and fear lest it should give rise to an explosion in what was really his domestic circle, or to a public scandal. But at one time these fits alternated with an only too clear realization of the fact that he was never truly happy except in that "Sluttery" in Turnstile Alley, Dublin, which had been arranged so as to take him back in fancy to another "Sluttery" in dear St. James' Street, London. The Dublin world was violently hostile to him, and had it not been so, it contained few who were fitted to be his companions. It was only in those stolen hours at the Vanhomrighs, that he could shake off the consciousness of his new uncongenial surroundings, and feel himself in touch again with his London life. The little elegancies and luxuries he found there were pleasant to him in themselves, opposite as they were to his own hard and frugal manner of life, and pleasanter still because they recalled to him the days when he was the honoured guest and friend of the finest and wittiest ladies in London. And besides all that, and partly because of it, there was another and a deeper cause why he had found so great a fascination in the "little times," the "drinking of coffee," as he called those visits of his in the kind of cypher language, which his fancy and his caution induced him to use when addressing Miss Vanhomrigh—a clumsy caution, since,

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like the conspirator's mask in a melodrama, it invited suspicion. When she first came to her residence in Ireland, it might be truly said that Swift was "in love" with Esther Vanhomrigh, if it were once fairly admitted that there are as many different meanings to that phrase as there are different dispositions in the world. In the case of Swift it implied no all-pervading passion or emotion, but a sentiment which flitted over the surface of his nature and came or went without deflecting its deeper currents. For years this sentiment had been as it were the bloom on his true affection for Esther Johnson, and had they never separated, their attachment might have remained among the golden pages in the Book of the human heart. But it had been his pride to reflect that his feeling for Esther Johnson, tender as it was, had never had power to shake the conclusions of his judgment; so he neither married her nor allowed her to follow him to London. But the mistakes of pure reason are sometimes as foolish as those of pure love, since both of them reckon with but one side of human nature.

Fate, it must be admitted, seemed bent on showing the great satirist that her humour was as biting as his own; especially when she bestowed on Esther Vanhomrigh an estate in County Dublin. At first legal business obliged her to take lodgings in the town itself, which she did with pleasure, little imagining the awkward situation in which she was placing her Cadenus. His friend Gay would have found there material for another "Beggar's Opera," with a Dean in the part of Macheath. It was true, truer than he himself knew, that the Dean could have been happy with either, if "t'other dear charmer" had been away. A mutual tenderness and the extreme adaptability of Mrs. Johnson's mind and character would soon have closed the gulf that Swift's absence in England had opened between himself and her, had there not been a reason for coldness on one side and uneasiness on the other. She could never have given him that understanding sympathy in his highest interests which he found with Esther Vanhomrigh, but her social charm and wit, her 'festivity," as her friend Delany called it, and the natural philosophy of her disposition were completely in harmony with other sides of his complex nature. Swift's love for her might have lost its bloom, it might have been in abeyance, but it could not be wholly destroyed. It was never, however, in so much peril as for the first years after his return to the Deanery. His public and social life was full of difficulties and disagreeables;

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now was the time when the old gay unexacting tenderness he had learned to expect from P. P. T. would have exerted more than its old charm. He found instead a measured friendliness, an irritability that showed itself in cold sarcasm to himself and in downright snubs to Dingley. Dingley, too, gave him the impression that she was secretly against him. The presence of Dingley at all their interviews had been a condition of his own making, which he was therefore ashamed to break of his own accord, but he sometimes wished P. P. T. would have whispered to him in her pretty way, half-laughing, half-wistful, that she had an errand in the town for Dingley, if he could possibly spare his D. D. Once she would do so, and he would say "no" to the suggestion. Now he would have hailed it, but she appeared resigned to the situation or averse to seeing him alone. He wondered what she knew, but concluding silence and jealousy incompatibilities in a woman, he unjustly suspected her friend and his own predecessor, Dr. Sterne, of having spoiled her by a too servile admiration, and even perhaps by an offer of marriage. Meantime his happiest hours were spent at the Vanhomrighs, in the warm atmosphere of Esther's love and ardent sympathy. Little by little beneath the stress of his own feelings and of her complaints, his resolution to go there seldom gave way. He never went often enough to satisfy her, but at least he went often enough to set afloat the gossip to which he was so femininely sensitive. Angry with himself, with Esther, with everybody, he determined to break off their intercourse for a time, and she submitted with a better grace than he expected, triumphantly conscious that his relations to her had become much more tender during the year and a half that she had been in Ireland, and not yet believing Mrs. Johnson to be a serious obstacle. She removed to Cellbridge, but the report which had reached Swift reached P. P. T. also. She had heard enough and to spare of the Miss Vanhomrighs' elegance and "abundance of wit," and the good fortunes they would have when their law-matters were settled. As new-comers they had made some sensation in Dublin. Mrs. Johnson's friend, Mr. Ford, who was shut out of politics by the fall of his party, finding them well received, had devoted his leisure to falling seriously in love with Molly, who though more delicate than of old, had not been an invalid during the first years of their residence in Dublin. The Vanhomrighs, however, did not forgive his former defection. Then came the definite report that Swift was to marry the elder,

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In vain did the two ladies retire to Cellbridge, and Swift pay his daily visit at P. P. T.'s lodgings on Ormonde's Quay, with a punctuality born of self-reproach and a reaction of feeling. P. P. T. was not only pale and worn, but she, the soul of "festivity," was silent and depressed. At length came a day when she was ill and would not see the Dean. Day after day passed, and still she would not see him. Swift was miserable. He realized then how deeply-rooted was this old attachment, and how ill he could spare her out of his life. But so strong was the wall of reserve that had grown up between these two reserved natures and their common shrinking from the "scene" that could alone break it down—a shrinking accentuated on Swift's side by an uneasy conscience—that he preferred making a confidant of a third person to facing an explanation with Mrs. Johnson. He selected their common friend, the Bishop of Dromore, for the delicate part of go-between; and P. P. T. was grateful to him for not having approached her directly. She feared that the pent-up feelings of years might break out at his touch in a way painful to both, and sweep before them the last remnants of his love. With the Bishop she was able to preserve her dignity. She told him how long she had known of the intimacy between the Dean and Miss Vanhomrigh, and of the continual uneasiness she suffered at his silence on the subject and at the persistent reports of his intention to marry the lady. The end of it was that a few months after, in the twilight of an April evening, P. P. T. stole out and over the bridge to the Deanery without her Dingley. Swift himself opened the door to her. He looked pale and serious, but very gentle and kind. He had made a great sacrifice of feeling in offering to marry Esther Johnson privately, and it did not strike him, nor even her at the time, that the sacrifice was inadequate. He drew her into the dining-parlour, put his arm round her and kissed her gravely on the hair, and she laid her still beautiful head on his shoulder. They were silent, for the thoughts of both flew back to the only other time when they had stood in this, the eternal lover's attitude. Then:—

"Do you remember the pleached walk at Moor Park?" she asked with a little nervous laugh, like a girl's.

"Yes—yes," he answered sadly, staring over her head with melancholy cavernous eyes. He saw the green pleached walk, with the summer shower and the summer sunshine glistening at once upon it; he saw the pair that had sheltered beneath it, the

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tall, dark, ill-dressed young Secretary, gnawed by dissatisfied pride and ambition, and saw beside him that gay enchanting creature, half child, half woman, who had known so well how to soothe alike the sufferings of his heart and of his vanity—whose toy and whose idol, whose slave and whose god he had been in the idyllic days at Moor Park. He saw her as if it had been yesterday, as she stood there on a garden bench reaching up to catch a cherry-tree spray, that had somehow found its way through the upper greenery of the pleached walk, and pulling and eating the ripe crimson cherries with childish eagerness. And she had thrown a bunch down to him, and he had let them fall on the ground, and would not eat them. Then playful, yet a little petulant too, she shook the rain-laden branches above him, and down rushed a cold glittering shower of water over his head and shoulders and also between his neck and his cravatte. An exclamation of anger on his part, and at a bound she was close to him, hastily wiping his coat with her handkerchief, and lifting the loveliest of young faces, half laughing, half pleading to his. So it had happened that his arms had been round her before this, and then he had kissed her, not as now and sometimes since, once on the forehead, but a dozen times on the mouth. Perhaps the advent of an under-gardener had alone prevented the utterance of some word too definite to be withdrawn. As it was, he regained his prudence and presence of mind sufficiently to say with pretended severity as they walked homewards, that P. P. T. was grown a great girl now and must give up her hoyden ways, and he for his part begged pardon for forgetting that she was no longer a little miss but a fine young lady, and should be careful to remember it in his future behaviour. Yet the brief episode, whose significance he had thus at once tried to obliterate, had remained in both their memories.

"We are both of us a little older than we were then," said the Dean, shrugging his shoulders and smiling sadly. "Even you, P. P. T., are a little the worse for wear, though you are still too handsome by half to throw yourself away on a battered old hulk like me. Yes, we are too old friends to turn lovers; but believe me, my dear, if anything could have given me a greater affection and esteem for you than I had before, 'tis this conduct of yours, so much above your sex—this keeping silence when—in a matter which—which——" He paused.

"Hush!" she cried nervously. "Don't let's speak of it; 'tis all over as far as I am concerned. Believe me, dear honoured

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friend, I have been nothing but proud and content to be loved any fashion you chose, so long as you loved me. And you do love me, don't you, P. D. F. R.?"

"Oh, yes, P. P. T. No one knows me as well as you do. We were very happy together once, and now we are going to be happy together again, aren't we, P. P. T.?"

"Quite happy," she answered with a smile of confidence, and arm in arm they went out into the garden, where the Bishop and Mr. Ford were awaiting them. Mr. Ford, as a friend equally devoted to Swift and Mrs. Johnson, was to be the only witness of the marriage-ceremony, except Mrs. Brent, the Dean's faithful housekeeper. There was a very small ruined chapel in the garden of the Deanery, and when the twilight was deepening to darkness, the Bishop slipped on a surplice and stood where the altar had been. Mr. Ford held a small lantern where it could give just light to read the service by, while Mrs. Brent stood sentinel at the door. Hastily and in a low voice the Bishop read a shortened form of the marriage service to the little group round the lantern. It was a still night; the thick ivy on the ruined walls gleamed in the light unstirred by any wind, and the hubbub of the city was plainly audible about them, the coaches rolling to rout or theatre, the cries of chairmen and link-boys, and the loud chaffering of buyers and sellers at the itinerant stalls within the Liberties of the Cathedral. Only a few feet of stone separated them from the crowd, which from high to low would have been keenly interested in their proceedings, had it been aware of them. But the brief ceremony passed without detection. Directly it was over Mr. Ford closed the dark lantern and the Bishop slipped off his surplice. There was a silence, only broken by a deep sigh. Whoever sighed it was not the bride.

Half an hour afterwards the unconscious Dingley was lending the sanction of her presence to a supper which she little imagined to be a bridal entertainment.

This strange marriage did not give Mrs. Johnson—she never used the name of Swift—the complete and permanent ease of mind she at first believed that it did, but it freed her from the dread of seeing the position which she had abstained from claiming yielded to a rival. And though it could not at once recall to her the vagrant heart of her friend, yet it was not without influence on him. His will had always in the end proved stronger than his inclinations; it had never come so

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near being conquered by them as in the matter of Esther Vanhomrigh. He knew that his interviews with her had gradually come to be more lover-like than was prudent or honourable; he had tried to put some stop to them before, but in vain. Now that he was formally bound to another woman, he felt it absolutely incumbent on him to make some change in their relations, at whatever cost to both. The gossip which had come to his ears gave him an excuse for not visiting her at Cellbridge that summer, and he never afterwards visited her frequently. A course of this starvation soon reduced his love for her to the dimensions of a tender, but not inconveniently tender friendship; nor could he bring himself to believe that it had not had the same effect on her. He looked back to his earlier relations with her as the most interesting and thrilling, if not the sweetest episode in his life, but apart from the fact of his marriage, he was conscious that every year he became a more unsuitable object for a romantic passion. He could not bear to be made ridiculous. So it came to pass that Esther's letters—alas! how terribly alike, month after month, year after year!—those letters which he had once torn open and devoured so eagerly, were now too often deliberately set down on his table, till a dish of coffee, a walk, or some other invigorating incident had put Cadenus into spirits to face their contents.

A sound of well-known steps and voices on the stairs, and after an instant's hesitation between the fire and his escritoire, he hastily pushed Essie's letter into the escritoire and turned the key.

"Confound women!" he muttered, opening the door of his room just as Dingley and Mrs. Johnson stood outside it. Howdee, Madam P. P. T.? Pray now stick this rascally plaster on; I think 'tis the worst that ever was made."

"Oh, you bad workman!" smiled P. P. T. "I warrant 'tis not the poor plaster is in fault." And she cut a fresh strip or two and applied them. Meanwhile Swift went on grumbling.

"You are precious late in bringing the dinner. I told you you'd find little enough here."

"You are better than your word," returned P. P. T. "'Tis a mercy you are generally that, or D. D. and I would lead a fine life. There is a good joint in the kitchen, and we have brought the rest ready prepared. I told you your part should be the wine."

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"Ay, you sent a pretty message, *hoping* I would give you a good bottle. One would suppose 'twas my custom to give you bad. Well, I can't give you *Mer*goose, because there a'nt such a thing, silly, but *Mar*goose there is for you and any other goose to mar its stomach with. Why the deuce must you be drinking and gaming every night of your life? Why can't you read? Some women do."

"Yes, and are laughed at for their pains by every man alive except you, Presto," returned Mrs. Johnson drily.

Presto was a name given to Swift by an Italian lady, which had commended itself to Stella's fancy, and almost superseded the old "P. D. F. R."

"Sure, Dean, if you had your way, you'd make poor Hetty lose the use of her eyes with your reading and stuff," put in Dingley.

"O you be quiet, Dingley," said Hetty, always ungrateful to her partisan. "Now see here, you naughty, naughty Rogue," and she held a long strip of plaster before his eyes. "If you won't be a good civil boy, and will be a bad quarrelling boy, I'll just clap this strip of plaster across your mouth and shut it up during my Majesty's pleasure, for you know you'll never get it off for yourself."

Swift smiled, and his good humour returned to him. "Of all the impudent, pretending hussies—!" he cried. Then he had to submit to sundry criticisms on his attire, and be sent to put on the new silk gown which Hetty had ordered for him, and which she had just seen the tailor's man bring to the door, and at last he was considered ready to receive his guests. It was not one of his public days, but Mrs. Johnson had hastily contrived a little party in honour of the betrothal of Archdeacon Walls' eldest daughter to Mr. Smith, a young English clergyman.

In those days there was no eating off silver-gilt plate at the Deanery, but on the other hand the Dean's quarrels with his servants did not rage unremittingly during the whole of dinner, as was the case in his old age. Mrs. Johnson sparkling at the other end of the table, did much to keep him quiet and contented. He had grown proud of her again, prouder even than he had been in her lovely girlhood. She was now undeniably past her youth, but hers was not a fugitive beauty, nor did her indefinable charm depend on that. Her character lost none of its suppleness with years. She had discovered, and gradually adapted herself as far as possible to the taste for feminine

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elegance which Swift had brought back from London, while her mind had once more risen to the level of the society which he gathered round him. Their circle had at first been small, but of late years it had rapidly widened. His wide and just benevolence, his kind-heartedness and intellectual gifts had won over to him both the poor, and the more intelligent among the rich, before his defence of Irish manufactures had given him a more universal popularity.

"Delany," he cried, mixing some water and sugar with his "Margoose"—as he and other good Britons called their Château Margaux—"the toast is Irish manufactures. 'Tis no matter whether you approve it, for any one sitting next Mrs. Johnson is bound to drink it or have the devil to pay. Mr. Smith, sir," to the young English clergyman, who was sitting up with ostentatious stiffness on her other side, "pray fill your glass. Mrs. Johnson insists."

"Tilly vally, no politics among friends, Dean," said she apprehensively, holding up her finger.

"No! No politics!" thundered the Dean, "Only Patriotism. Irish manufactures, gentlemen!"

And he raised his glass—but set it down untasted, staring in silence at the opposite wall, where something seemed to have caught his eye. Sucking in his cheeks, after his manner when tempted to laugh:—

"James Murphy," he said with dangerous mildness, addressing a raw Irish servant who stood at the side-board immediately behind him; "James Murphy, is not that enough for to-day? —Three penn'orth of Malaga raisins and one penn'orth of sweet almonds make fourpence; but as I scorn to be outdone by a servant even in stealing, I deduct eightpence from your board wages."

The unfortunate James, who was a new acquisition and could not imagine how his master came to have eyes in the back of his head, gasped aloud, and plunging forward with the dessert dish in his trembling hands put it down on the table with a crash that made the glasses ring and sent half its contents flying across the polished mahogany. Patrick, aware of the mirrors on the walls by means of which the Dean, whenever he sat at his round table, could see what was going on behind him, grinned as much as he dared. A furtive smile went round the table. P. P. T. blushed and bit her lip. Dr. Delany, a good friend to Swift and a better to her, laughed good-naturedly and cried out:

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"Come, Dean, you are forgetting your toast. Mrs. Johnson is all impatience."

Swift coloured and drooped his head in a momentary confusion, then raising his glass he glanced across the table at P. P. T., with his brightest, tenderest smile.

"Faith, Stella shall lead off. We fellows are never so happy as when we come after *her*. If Mr. Walpole himself were here, she'd make him drink his own damnation."

So Mrs. Johnson gave the toast.

"Irish manufactures!" she cried. "Down with English monopolies!"

Enthusiastic voices echoed round the table, and there was a great tossing of bumpers. Mr. Smith alone sat silent and touched his glass with pinched lips. Swift addressed him in his most courteous manner.

"Perhaps, sir, you fear to be drawn into party politics, but, faith, 'tis no such matter. Whig or Tory, we English in Ireland are all of one mind in resisting tyranny."

"I trust, Mr. Dean, in whatever country I may be, to remain a faithful friend to His Majesty's ministers," replied Mr. Smith stiffly.

"I see, sir," replied Swift, bravely repressing a sarcasm, "you fancy this old turncoat is trying to seduce you, but believe me when you have been in Ireland a bit longer, you'll not go over to the other side of the House—you'll be clean against the House altogether. What's Whig and Tory to you and me, sir? We've got our own country's affairs to see after, and whatever newcomers may think, they very soon join the Irish party—unless they have something to get by sticking to Ministers."

"Mr. Dean," said Dr. Winter, his pale intellectual face flushed with enthusiasm, "Mr. Dean, I trust you believe there are some of us would not betray our country for all the offices and preferments that ever were bestowed upon the venal."

"I believe that at least seven virtuous men might be found in this city, Winter," returned the Dean kindly, "and that you are one of them. But we Catos are not the only useful persons. I remember some ten years ago, when I was in London, busied with doing you Irish clergy that service for which you have ever since so cordially detested me——"

Here he was interrupted by groans and cries of "No, no."

"O but I say 'Yes, yes.'—Well, ten years ago I waited on an Irish clergyman that had got preferment in England, and

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entreated him, that was a known patriot, to use his glib tongue in favour of his poor country. 'With your eloquence, my dear sir,' says I—O, but I was a courtier then, Madam Stella!—'With your eloquence, what influence may you not exert?' 'Nothing, sir,' says he, with a twinkle in his eye, 'in comparison to what 'twill be when I am Canon of Mudchester. My patriotism is red-hot, sir, and will not grow cold by a little keeping.' When he was Canon I waited on him again, but he assured me that his patriotism would show much better from the elevation of a Deanery. So more for diversion than profit, I addressed myself to him at every step in his promotion, till he had arrived at his second Bishopric. 'At length, sir,' says he, 'I can gratify you, for no Irishman will ever be promoted to the Primacy. Let us consider the wrongs of our unhappy country.' And ever since he has been doing so, ay, and to some purpose."

"Yet I hope you'll allow us to prefer before his a patriotism like yours, Mr. Dean," said Dr. Winter, "that's beyond the control of ambition."

"How do you know that, sir?" returned Swift dryly. "You must be sensible there's not a cat in Ireland but's had as good a chance of promotion as myself this eight years. I might have forgot my country had I stayed in London—but never I think remembered its wrongs with indifference. I'll say for myself that I heartily hate iniquity wherever and whosoever's it may be—O I grow lean with hating it! Delany, how comes it you and Mrs. Johnson grow fat among the Philistines? Why does not your flesh shrink at the unrighteousness of the wicked?"

"Because, Mr. Dean," returned Dr. Delany, "we have an eleventh commandment against that."

"How so, Doctor?"

"'Fret not thyself because of the ungodly.'"

"A very good answer, Delany, a very good answer," returned Swift gently and sighed. "As for Mrs. Johnson, if I could put into my head half the philosophy of her heart, I should be the very prince of philosophers."

So he resigned for a time the leadership of the conversation, and Mrs. Johnson began describing the humours of a hunting-party at Mr. Ford's country-seat, where she had lately been staying, and every one laughed except Mr. Smith, who was determined not to commit himself in any direction. Then coffee came in, which the Dean insisted on making himself, for he

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openly called Mrs. Johnson's coffee ratsbane, and always declared he knew but one other person besides himself whose coffee was worth drinking; but would only grunt if an indiscreet friend enquired who that person might be. For it was Esther Vanhomrigh.

Now Madam P. P. T. dearly loved cards. On Sundays the Dean read her a sermon, and she did battle the while conscientiously but not always successfully, with sleep, generally contriving to catch the last word he had read, when he startled her by asking what it was in a tone of severe suspicion. On week days she played piquet, quadrille, or a round game, according to the number of the party, either from dinner to supper, or from supper to bed-time, and sometimes both. Swift did not love cards, though he played with P. P. T. most days. So this evening, not a great while after dinner, when the parlour shutters were closed and the table and candles put out for a round game, he cried off it, and took Dr. Winter to his library, "to see all the money he had got when he was in the Ministry," as he said. Then he opened some of his numerous little drawers, and showed a collection of antique coins, some brought for him by Lord Peterborough from Italy and Spain, others sent by Lady Mary Wortley Montague, through Mr. Pope. Also he exhibited certain trinkets and curiosities, given him by Lady Betty Germayne and other people of quality in London. Lastly he brought forth the real attraction of his library, two long churchwarden-pipes and a jar of tobacco.

"Do you smoke, Winter?" he asked in a somewhat shamefaced way. "If not, you must excuse me; I learned to smoke at Oxford when I was a young man."

"I love a pipe very well, sir," returned Dr. Winter, with perfect truthfulness, and began to fill a churchwarden from the jar, as one who well knew how. But in so doing he sprinkled some tobacco on the floor. Swift was on his knees in a minute, carefully sweeping it up.

"Pray take care, sir, or Mrs.—Mrs. Brent will think us sad sluts. Mrs. Johnson always tells me 'tis very dirty and disgusting to one's neighbours to smoke, and not at all becoming to a dignitary of the Church; but I say if I mayn't smoke, as I'm a Dean, I may as I'm a man of letters and an Oxford man. All Oxford men smoke."

Swift had for so many years dwelt with pleasure on his connection with Oxford, that he had almost come to believe he had

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received part of his education there, though in truth he had only been presented with a degree by the University through the interest of Sir William Temple.

So they sat down on each side of the fire and began to talk. And first they fell into a dispute which was already an old one between them, on the subject of the Bank of Ireland; a proposed institution which Swift had combated with but too much success. Mr. Winter, being a young man, was instinctively in sympathy with the spirit of commercial enterprise which was the most important characteristic of his generation. Having fought this battle o'er again, they turned to discuss the League for the exclusive support of Irish manufactures; and here they were at one. This being largely a question of dress, the transition was easy to the subject of Dublin ladies in general, and so to Miss Vanhomrigh; who it is needless to say had been among the first to join the League. Then Dr. Winter boldly asked the Dean to forward his suit with Esther. Swift made no answer, but started upright in his chair, took the pipe out of his mouth, and looked at the young man in a truly portentous manner.

Dr. Winter replied to the look with dignity: "If you think me unworthy of your friend, Mr. Dean, I can but make my excuses for having broached the matter you. But I shall not discontinue my addresses to her."

"What's that to me, sir?" cried Swift, leaning forward with his back to the light and poking the fire noisily. "Continue them till Doomsday if 'tis your pleasure so to do."

There was a silence, and presently Dr. Winter rose, knocked the ashes out of his pipe and said coldly:

"With your leave, Mr. Dean, I will go wish good evening to the ladies."

He made his bow and would have left the room, but Swift caught him by the sleeve.

"Pooh, my dear man," he said, "will you quarrel with a friend about a woman? Believe an old fellow that's past these frailties, there's not a slut in the world that's worth it. I ask your pardon if I have treated you roughly through mere surprise and—admiration at your demand. Come now, sit down and let us talk the matter over."

Dr. Winter consented to be mollified.

"The truth is, sir," continued the Dean, "Miss Vanhomrigh like other persons of sense, hath a true philosophical disinclination for the bonds of matrimony——." Here he broke off,

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conscious that though this was a state of mind which he had been endeavouring for ten years to produce in her, he had been eminently unsuccessful in so doing; and went on hurriedly. "Dr. Price, who is as you are aware a gentleman of learning and good preferment, paid his addresses to her a few years since, but she would none of him. And Mr. Ford had a like ill-fortune with Mrs. Mary, before her sickness showed itself to be mortal.'

"I fear, sir, poor Mrs. Mary hath but a little time longer in this world," returned Dr. Winter. "Miss Vanhomrigh may then find a single state less agreeable than she supposes. I did not ask you to press my suit upon her immediately, but to lend me your influence with her as seemed most convenient."

"'Tis a very serious matter that you would have me engage in, Winter," said he. "To assist two persons, for both of whom I have so great a friendship and esteem, to enter into a state I love and esteem so little. Yet, God knows, if 'twill in truth make you both content—and such instances may be found—God knows I would not be backward in the business. I'll promise you nothing at present, nothing except to consider your wish and do the best for you according to my judgment. She is indeed very superior to the generality of her sex and has the most generous spirit in the world to those she loves. She has also a discerning mind and some reading, which fits her to be the helpmeet of a scholar and a man of wit. Besides her housewifery is superior to that of many ladies who thank God aloud, when a suitor is by, 'they can make a pudden and choose a silk but never could abide 'their book.' Yet after all she's but a woman, and Satan made her, whatever the Scriptures may say. Come, light another pipe, and let us converse on reasonable matters."

(*To be continued.*)

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AMONGST THE CAGE-DWELLERS.

TWO incentives induced us to visit an unexplored corner of the Plain of Cilicia. Firstly, on our way thither we could pass some time amongst a curious set of wanderers who come down in winter with their flocks to the plain, live in reed huts like bird-cages, and call themselves Afshahs, a tribe of uncertain origin numerously scattered over the whole mountainous district extending from the north of Persia to the northern end of the vast plain which runs deep into the Taurus mountains, and is separated from the Euphrates valley and Northern Syria by the Anti-Taurus. Secondly, at the corner in question exist extensive ruins of ancient date, remains of a city, name unknown, situated on the river Jeihan, the ancient Pyramus, and to examine these and find out that ancient name was really the most prominent object of our expedition into the land of cages.

The spice of danger, without which no expedition can be genuinely enjoyable, is always to be found in Asia Minor, and in one particular corner we were told of certain Kourdish and Circassian tribes given more or less to plunder when a convenient opportunity presents itself, and we were recommended to get the governor of the province to give us a Turkish soldier, not that he was likely to be the least protection to us if attacked, but his presence with us would represent the Government, and any damage done to us when in his charge would bring the perpetrators thereof into direct antagonism with the authorities.

North of Adana, now the chief town in the Cilician plain, a great expanse of barren level country stretches like a sea for miles; here and there are small undulations with stunted trees, but nothing breaks the monotony of the scene, until certain rocks are sighted at a distance, looking as if they belonged to the mountains; but as you approach nearer they stand up like islands in the plain and are crowned with the ruined strongholds of bygone rulers of the land. Our first day's journey was a

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weary one without excitement, unless that be considered such which led us at the instigation of our servant to play a sort of traveller's picquet with the objects we met; for he told us how the people of these regions always take auguries on the first day of a journey. Good auguries consist in meeting either pretty girls, doves, gazelles, or eagles; bad auguries in sighting beggars, Jews, ravens, or horses. Our auguries were distinctly bad, inasmuch as we saw many beggars on leaving Adana, and no pretty girls, doves, or gazelles; though later in the day a few eagles raised our spirits, we could not feel sure that they would count. No augury could have been evil enough to warn us of the misery of our first night in a roadside *khan*. We dared not unpack our bedding, for the place was alive with vermin. We, our muleteers, our servant, and several other woe-begone travellers like ourselves, occupied the same dingy room. Our saddles were our pillows, and an old dirty carpet our bed. It was one of those dark spots in a traveller's life which even in the retrospect is unpleasant to dwell upon.

Very early next morning, as early as we could possibly be under weigh, we shaped our course in the direction of the fortified rock of Anazarba. At the foot of this rock in Roman times had been a mighty city, the metropolis of the district, with its triumphal arch, its colonnade, its long walls, its theatre, and its rock-cut reliefs. Within these old walls now reside a tribe of Afshahs, and with them we proposed to tarry for a few days and make acquaintance with the first object of our expedition.

Their encampment was not very encouraging to look at, and resembled a set of large hampers stuck in the mud; for these people do not dwell in tents like other nomad tribes, but erect for themselves huts from the reeds which grow in the neighbouring marshes, as winter residences. In ten minutes, at the command of our soldier, all the household goods were cleared out of one of these cages and piled on the mud outside. Mattresses, clothing, frying-pans, and churns. We forthwith took possession of our reed tenement and did our best to appear pleased, but it was really more like a bird-cage than a house, with many gaps between the reeds, through which the wind and rain penetrated during a storm which broke over us on the first night of our stay there. This cage was thatched with dried grass, but the rain came through nevertheless, and we had to thatch our beds with our waterproofs and umbrellas, and our poor servant groaned all

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night in his partition, for he had only a mattress for his bed, and the floor was inches deep in mud.

The architecture of these reed huts is uniform; each is divided into two rooms by a reed partition, formed like a triangle, in which is the stable for the calves, wretched little things which never seemed to sleep at night, and were to us a constant though minor worry. Masses of reeds are piled up outside with a view to keeping off the wind, and probably the roof was good when it was new; but it was springtime now, and before returning to the hills the Afshahs always burn their winter abodes; so that at the time of our visit dilapidations were not attended to. One reed hut we saw was supported in the centre by a pillar made of reeds, strongly reminding us of the original pattern of the fluted column. Altogether, in spite of the discomfort, the novelty of our reed encampment kept our spirits above despair. By day it was delightfully quaint and picturesque, but who can describe the horrors of a wet night therein? Around us prowled goats, cows, and donkeys. Everybody seemed to be awake and actively engaged in preventing these animals from eating their domiciles; a provoking donkey took a fancy to eating the reeds of which our house was constructed, threatening with its vigorous tugs the downfall of the whole. Every time I drove him away and got warm in bed he returned to the charge; and never again, if I can avoid it, will I live in anything good to eat.

The Afshahs use the wet reeds of the marshes for fuel, and these go off when put in the flames like a discharge of musketry, and until we knew the cause we believed ourselves to be the object of attack from some Kourdish or Circassian robbers, and felt for our revolvers. Fettered horses clamped about, women screamed, and the nocturnal noises only gave place as morning dawned to the bustle of milking and the dull thud of the churn. Our second night was better, our third was actually good, such creatures of habit are we all.

There was another great drawback to our peace of mind whilst amongst the Afshahs, namely, the dogs; the great grey-coloured sheep-dogs, standing three feet high, with large heads like St. Bernards; fierce animals, trained to tackle the wild beasts of the mountains, and to act as patrols of the encampment during the night. On arrival, the first thing the kindly Afshahs did was to warn us about the dogs, and to advise us never to step out of our cages alone, or wander, as we wished, at our own sweet will without one of the tribe to protect us. It really was too

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ridiculous to see our soldier go for a walk under the protection of a little child, and to watch our servant standing at our cage door with a jug in his hand, not daring to go for milk until an old crone came to his assistance, and put her naked foot upon the head of the growling quadruped which was threatening his path. They feed these dogs on butter-milk poured into holes in the ground, and are greatly attached to them. "Better shoot one of their children than a dog," was the advice given to me when I threatened to use my revolver if attacked. "They are their policemen, and without their dogs their cattle would soon be stolen." At night time the dogs are trained to wander around the encampment at some little distance, and the first night we were there, it had been a matter of wonder to us that amid all the other terrible noises we never heard the bark of a dog; but the Afshahs are always on the watch, and a growl from one of these sentries is enough to summon them to the spot, gun in hand.

We could not help thinking how valuable dogs such as these would be for military purposes, and a passage in Pliny which I had read when young, and thought somewhat exaggerated, occurred to me; when that author relates how King Saramantes lost his throne and regained it by fighting dogs, and how the Roman legions feared the bites of the savage dogs of the Cimbri more than their spears. I am not usually afraid of dogs, but I defy any one to retain his equanimity with a row of Afshah dogs growling at him. In the mountains to the centre of Asia Minor where these dogs are bred, I am told the nomads will give as much as ten pounds for a good specimen, more, indeed, than they would give for a camel or a horse: so no wonder they greatly prize them. We were very kind indeed to these dogs during our stay at Anazarba, and before we left had won the allegiance of those which resided in our immediate vicinity by liberal gifts of bones and bread, but we never could stray far alone without hearing an ominous growl which necessitated a speedy retreat.

The Afshahs are the possessors of many cows, small ones not so much bigger than their dogs. They have goats, too, and sheep, and all these animals have their ears cut after a certain fashion, so that each family knows its own. The cows belonging to the owners of our cage had their ears split right up the centre, so that they represented the curious appearance of cows with four ears, two held as erect as cows are wont to hold their ears, and two hanging loosely at each side. The Afshah women make

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their butter with very primitive churns; the milk is put into the dried skin of an animal, fastened up at the ends; this is hung on a tripod of reeds before the tent door, and the inflated skin bears a painful resemblance to the torso of the defunct animal. She then inserts a dasher, the handle of which is a reed with a cone-shaped piece of wood at the bottom, and with vigorous turnings of this, she produces the butter.

Some time before the hour at which their mothers were due from the pasture the excitement of our calves was intense: this reaches its height when the distant lowing of the returning herd is first heard. The calves are then muzzled with a rope and tied to the mother's leg until a sufficient supply of milk has been drawn. I was told that this is a little piece of deception practised on the cows which are refractory and will not stand still unless their calf is near, and all the while she imagines the calf is enjoying its evening meal, instead of being placed in the most tantalising position possible.

Anazarba itself is a place of great interest from its ruined remains; the rock is about 1500 feet at its highest point, with cliffs of sheer precipices 800 feet in depth in parts. This rock is two miles long, jagged and difficult of access. It is crowned with the ruins of the Armenian kings of Cilicia, who, with the help of the Crusaders, turned out the Saracens from their fortresses on the Cilician plain, and held them until the end of the Crusades and the consequent Ottoman conquest at the close of the fourteenth century. The view from the summit is highly picturesque over the far-stretching plain intersected by many streams and with its background of mighty mountains. Dotted over it are the encampments and villages of many tribes, and in the far, far distance is the silvery line of the Mediterranean. You ascend the rock by a staircase hewn in the days of the ancient Greek inhabitants. To the right and left of you are the stone sarcophagi and rock-hewn tombs of these ancient inhabitants, whilst in the centre of the fortress which crowns the summit is a tiny Armenian church, with an inscription around it which tells how it was erected by King Thoros, or Theodore, third of the Roupenian line of Armenian kings in the twelfth century.

Willebrand, Canon of Oldenburg, a German Crusader, visited Anazarba in 1211. He speaks of it as "a strong castle on a high mountain in the middle of the plain," and he also bears testimony to the miserable unhealthiness of the plain, which, since Alexander the Great caught a fever by bathing in the Cydnus at Tarsus,

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down to our own times has been fatal to many European travellers who have ventured on to it in the malarious season. When the summer heats come on, every one who can, goes up to the mountains, the nomads accompanying their flocks, and the wealthier inhabitants of the towns likewise have their summer abodes in Yaelas up in the mountains; only a few fever-stricken poor remain to drag on a weary existence until the autumn rains come on and free them from the scourge. A Knight Templar on his way to the Holy Land wrote thus of the Cilician plain to the Pope:—"The land is in itself so sickly and bad, that if four thousand horsemen passed through it, however strong and well, it would be wonderful if at the end of the year five hundred would be found."

The ancient Roman town of *Cæsarea penes Anazarbum* lay at the foot of this precipitous rock, and was enclosed by a double wall with four gates and a ditch forming a large parallelogram, of which the mountain formed one side, and the space between is covered with ruins, amongst which our friends the Afshahs have built their huts. Under the immediate favour of the Roman Emperors, Anazarba flourished until the days of Justinian, when a terrible earthquake overthrew it; and though that Emperor restored it in a great measure, it seems never to have regained its former pitch of prosperity. Three aqueducts brought water to it from the neighbouring hills; one underground and two supported on arches, which still remain and stretch like huge dragons across the plain, recalling the colossal works of ancient Rome as seen now in the Campagna. There is no desolation so complete to my mind as that of ruined grandeur; and as we looked down from the rock of Anazarba on the vast sea of ruins, the sole tenants of which are now only some twenty families of a half-savage nomad tribe, we felt the desolation almost oppressive.

Outside the walls of Anazarba there is now a far-stretching marsh covered with acres of reeds, the building material for their winter encampments of which the wandering tribes in the immediate vicinity make use. In spite of the close proximity of this malarious marsh, our Afshahs seemed fairly healthy specimens of humanity, owing doubtless to the fact that as soon as the summer heats come on they flee to the mountains. Occasionally they suffer from a throat affection, which I take it is akin to diphtheria; they call it *teletmeh*, and their prescription for it is to wrap the sufferer in the warm skin of a newly-slaughtered animal, and leave him to recover or die. Spleen, too, is very

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common amongst them, especially amongst children; but, as a whole, they appear to be a healthy race, owing doubtless to the fact that the sickly children die off, and only the strong ones survive the exposure to which their infancy is subject.

Some of the Afshah women are decidedly handsome. Their heads are bound round with white cloths, not always very clean, in turban fashion; their hair is worn in plaits down the back, and at the end of the plait is attached a long false piece, in from thirty to forty plaits, coming down almost to the heels. This is made at home of cotton or silk and dyed to match the colour of the hair as nearly as may be. They call them *ourmeh*, and set so high a value upon them, that we were never able to effect a purchase. On to this false plait the wealthier women attach all kinds of ornaments of a rude nature: silver cases containing talismans, cowrie-beads, and other odds and ends. When milking, these long plaits trail in the mud and get horribly dirty. The rest of the costume of the Afshah women consists of an embroidered print jacket, open very low indeed in front, red drawers tied above the ankle, and bare feet.

Two Circassian worthies from a village behind the rock of Anazarba paid a visit to our encampment one day with the express purpose of selling us smuggled and very excellent tobacco. All our men invested largely in it, including our soldier, in spite of the fact that he was doing an act strictly illegal. The Circassians were exceedingly well mounted on swift-footed cobs, and wore, of course, the sheepskin caps and long coats with a belt for cartridges round the waist, which gives a sinister appearance to every Circassian. They manifested a very friendly disposition towards us, and invited us to visit their village that afternoon; an invitation which we could not resist, in spite of the evil character the inhabitants have; for they said that a party of Circassians had come from a distant encampment to arrange about a betrothal, and that there would be some fun attending it.

It is the custom amongst the Circassians to seek a wife, or rather purchase one, from another of their tribes; that is to say, they are distinctly exogamists, and when a bride is sought, the young man sends a deputation to arrange the preliminaries, which deputation had just arrived in the village we visited. It is a cold-blooded ceremony this Circassian betrothal; the purchaser has always limited his deputy to a certain sum; so many *baitals* he will give for the girl and no more; *baital* being

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the standard of value amongst the Circassians and means "mares,"—one mare or *baital* is equal to twenty sheep, and one camel is equal to four mares, and so on.

Considerable excitement attended our arrival in the village, which bid fair at one time to put a stop to the more interesting business of the day; but when this had subsided, the bargaining ceremony went on between the father of the girl and the deputation. Business was at length done, and as an earnest of the engagement entered into, food was produced, consisting chiefly of chopped-up meat, curds and bread. We were invited to partake of the repast, and though it was not much to our liking we did not venture to refuse, and before it was concluded considerable mirth ensued, and we put the Circassians down as people of great levity and liveliness. Finally, as evening was drawing on, the deputation mounted their horses, and amid the barking of dogs, the firing of guns, and general rejoicing, they scampered off across the plain with the wings of the wind.

I think it is this custom of apparently bartering their daughters for flocks and herds, which is common, not only among the Circassians but amongst most of the mountain tribes in Eastern Asia Minor, that has given rise to the idea of Circassian beauties being bought for the harems of Constantinople. The fact is true, doubtless, but then it must be borne in mind that the father is not doing anything wrong according to his lights, but merely carrying out his idea of the legitimate marriage contract.

The Circassians who dwell on the Cilician plain are all horse-breeders. Around the reed village which we visited, grazed innumerable steeds, most of them mares with foals; and I was told that some rich tribes of Circassians here own as many as two thousand horses. It was late that evening when we got back to our cage at Anazarba, and the dogs gave us an unusually warm reception.

The next day we bade farewell to our Afshahs at Anazarba and our cage, and rode across the plain eastwards in quest of the second object of our expedition. It was a brilliant day, and after the late rains the plain was luxuriant in its verdure and carpeted with flowers. At one point we passed through a perfect forest of blackthorn all in full blossom, and smelling deliciously. The effect of peeps through the black branches of these, laden with their white flowers, on to the distant snow-capped peaks of the Anti-Taurus range was very curious, and forcibly recalled pictures of Japan.

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Encampments of reeds like the one we had left were dotted all around, and always looked like a pile of hampers at a railway station as seen through a magnifying glass. Presently we got on to slightly higher ground, and the reed huts gave place to more substantial tenements of mud and sun-dried bricks. In one of these we found the female part of the population, busily employed in preparing a species of fuel called by them *tezek*. When the spring definitely sets in they clean out their Augean stables, a process they never attempt in the winter time. All the products of these filthy abodes they spread on a flat space before their houses; this they mix with a certain amount of straw and water, and with naked legs the women of the tribe, whose vocation it as to make the *tezek*, trot about in this delightful mixture all day to get it to the right consistency; they seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves, now and again picking a piece up and studying it with a critical eye, as a cook would study her broth; their clothes were one mass of it, but this did not seem to trouble them much, for they laughed and chatted gaily. When the *tezek* has assumed a flat clayey substance about six inches deep, the treading process is over, and they leave it to dry in the sun; but before it is quite hard they cut it into blocks, and erect out of these blocks circular cone-shaped edifices, in which form it is left until fit to use; and storks are particularly fond of building their nests on these mounds. New *tezek*, when burnt, is an abomination, but really good old-seasoned *tezek* is not unlike peat. The Afshahs are very understanding in the matter of *tezek*, and use it not only for fuel, but as a sort of cement or coating for the inside of their reed huts. When dry, they cover this coating with whitewash, and often paint it with fantastic patterns in red.

After crossing two rivers, both tributaries of the Pyramus, one called the Somban, which had a bridge, and the other the Savroon, which had none, and was exceedingly rapid and swollen, consequent on the melting of the snows, and caused us no little anxiety, we reached the straggling village of Kars Bazaar, the residence of a Turkish moudir or Government representative in the district. Kars Bazaar is situated at the foot of the mountains, and derives its name from *Kar* or *snow*, which is brought down here on mules in the summer and sold. Here we enjoyed ourselves immensely in a real house with real walls, our host being a Greek from the interior, who could understand nothing of his own language except the characters, and whose literature consisted of a few books and newspapers printed in

Turkish in Greek character. His intelligence was, however, of an exceeding high class after the Afshahs, and he entertained us well.

After a rest of two days at Kars we set off again eastwards, skirting the mountains by the edge of the plain, seeing nothing of greater interest than an Afshah and his wife in the garb of nature, washing themselves and their clothes in a stream. Most of these good folks by the Pyramus possess but one suit of cotton clothes, and on certain rare occasions they wash them and themselves too, drying them on their backs, and feeling no manner of shame in appearing thus as nature made them.

We halted for our midday rest at another reed village of the Afshahs, called Bosikevi, where we inspected several houses and greatly admired the men, who wore blue loose jackets embroidered with gold, white-cotton trousers tied over the ankle, and carried narrow-handled guns over their shoulders, elegantly carved, and with several bands of chased silver adorning the barrel. The women, too, were much smarter than those of Anazarba, wearing little *fezes* bound round with handkerchiefs and round gold ornaments fixed into their hair at each ear; their false plaits, too, were more profusely decorated with silver ornaments and triangular talismans to keep off the evil eye.

Furthermore, in each feminine nose is bored a hole, and in the aperture is inserted what at first we took to be a common nail. When, however, we had summoned up courage enough to examine this peculiarity more closely we found that they were cloves, stuck into the nose with the object, I have not the slightest doubt, of maintaining near the region of the olfactory nerves a perpetual sweet smell, to counteract the numerous ones of a different nature that they have around them. In our commissariat department we happened to have some cloves, and presents of a few of these "ornaments" were most gratefully received. At Bosikevi each cage has its fine wooden *amphora* for fetching water from the well, standing at the door. These are made out of the hollow trunk of a tree and decorated with rude patterns. In the brilliant sunshine the women had placed before their houses, on coloured carpets, piles of grain and rice, and they were busily employed in sorting these and preparing them for the grindstone by first removing the refuse. This occupation was decidedly more pleasing and feminine than that of *tezek* making, and we retained pleasant memories of our midday halt at Bosikevi.

That evening we again reposed in a cage at the village of Hemita Kaleh, which is built principally of reeds on the banks of

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the Pyramus, just below a ruin-crowned spur of the mountains, which here come close down to the river bank. The Jeihan, or, as it is better known by its ancient name, the Pyramus, is a hideous yellow stream, which, when swollen with the melting snows, eats away in its course the muddy banks; its course, too, is often changing, they told us, and is a constant trouble to a ferry which crosses it a little below Hemita, and which has from time to time to seek fresh moorings, so that the traveller who is anxious to make use of it can never tell to a mile or two where he may find it.

The ruined castle of Hemita is not unlike one of those mediæval edifices which adorn the Rhine, and was evidently in the days of the Armenian Kingdom a place of considerable importance, commanding as it does the right bank of the river, and the road to the pass in the mountains. The women of Hemita were garbed like those of Bosikevi, and every one of them had a clove stuck in her nose; their occupation was making the *killeems* or coarse carpets used by the Afshahs, which are by no means ugly when not made with European dyes, and resplendent with scarlet, grass-green, and magenta. Here we were in the land of buffaloes, which wallowed in the shallows of the Pyramus, and of buffalo carts, which are used for agricultural purposes, long triangular drays, with a buffalo yoked to either side of the apex, and with huge wooden wheels fixed on to a particularly clumsy axle. The inhabitants of Hemita are more agricultural than their neighbours, and some of them remain here all the year round; the consequence is that most of them look shrivelled up and yellow with fever, and gifts from our quinine bottle were highly appreciated. One wizened man with round yellow face and protruding cheek-bones, when he took off his fez, looked the image of a Chinaman; for the men shave their hair off their crowns very closely, and let the part which hangs below the fez grow quite long.

The agricultural implements used by these farmers are very primitive; their plough is just a stem of a tree with the share fixed on at one end, and at the other a piece of wood is inserted to act as the tail; their spades are wooden and have the step about a foot above the shovel, like the old Roman spade called the *Bipalium*, we see in pictures. Their grain they store in round holes in the ground, covering it with straw and earth after a fashion common in the East in classical days, and called by the Greeks σίροι.

Close to Hemita, and living in a tent on the hill-side, is an old

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man to whom we were conducted, as one of the chief curiosities of the place. He rejoiced in the name of "Hassan of the flocks," and aspires to the patriarchal age of one hundred and twenty-one. Every summer he goes up to the mountains in company with his children's children with their flocks, and every winter he returns with his family to seek for pasture by the banks of the Pyramus. He is undoubtedly of great age, and cannot now walk very far, but seeing that the Afshahs are long behind that point of civilization at which baptismal registers begin to be kept, I am sure his tale of longevity will meet with but little credence. Hassan and his family were just off for the mountains, and had only left their reed hut a few days before, and I must say the black goat's-hair tents, with walls of reed matting to protect them on the windward side, look more inviting residences than the huts of Hemita.

Whilst engaged in studying the ruins of Boudroum, the final object of our expedition, we took up our abode in another reed encampment of the Afshahs called "Meadow Village," delightfully situated about two hundred feet above the Pyramus, amongst fir trees, with the stupendous mountains of the Taurus behind it. Our tenement here was decidedly more substantial than that at Anazarba. The reed cage was all coated inside with white-washed *tezek* gaily painted red with henna, which considerably diminished the number of draughts. A window, too, had been constructed in the wall; of course, only an unglazed aperture, which gave us an opportunity of looking at what was going on around, and the inhabitants, a very inquisitive race, had also the entire satisfaction of seeing what we were about. The ladies of "Meadow Village" were even smarter than those of Bosikevi; they darken their eyes and eyebrows with a stuff called *kohl*, consisting of a collyrium of antimony, kept in a bottle and applied with a stick. Joined eyebrows are considered a beauty amongst them, and this juncture is often effected by a line of *kohl*, for even nomad Afshah women are not above the weaknesses of their sex. They have really beautiful ornaments hung above their ears, and their feet are clad in long red-leather boots, for there are many snakes in the locality. Above these boots hang red baggy trousers, and above this a blue skirt. One female, the wife of the Aga, a chief of the tribe, went about her daily avocations of milking and churning in a red satin jacket, her fez was bound round with lace, and a frontlet of sequins adorned her forehead; she was very handsome, too, quite my idea of what the wife of a nomad chieftain should be.

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Our days in investigating the ruins of Boudroum passed pleasantly enough, and terminated with great satisfaction to ourselves. Not only did we find out that the city was anciently called Hieropolis Castabala, the last place that Alexander the Great stopped at before the battle of Issos, but also we found several inscriptions which placed for us the temple there, which Strabo mentions was dedicated to Artemis Perasia, the priestess of which used to walk over hot burning coals without getting burnt. The great feature of the place was a long colonnade about half a mile in length, many columns of which are still standing; it has a lofty acropolis in the centre of the town, built on a spur of the mountains, a large theatre, and other evidences of a large population and advanced civilization. Now these ruins are inhabited only by a few Afshahs who pasture their flocks amongst them and possess some very objectionable dogs. Mahomed of the Broken Hand lives with his family in the theatre; another family have taken possession of what remains of the temple of Artemis, the head of which gets his distinguishing appellation from a wounded leg and arm, acquired in a contest with a lion, they told me; but I doubt the fact, seeing that the Afshahs have the careless habit of calling all big game lions and tigers, including leopards, lynxes, and other less formidable beasts which abound in the mountains between Cilicia and the Valley of the Euphrates, amongst which the Afshahs pass the summer months.

The day before we left "Meadow Village," a great hubbub occurred; a Government official passed this way whose occupation it is to number the flocks and collect the taxes on them. Somehow or other, information was given him that certain members of this tribe had concealed a portion of their flocks in caves in the mountains. He set out with two soldiers to verify the facts, and on his return made the delinquents pay double. Naturally there was a great deal of shouting and unpleasant language, and the affair at one time seemed to us to be assuming a serious aspect; but to our contentment an understanding was arrived at, and the objectionable tax-collector took his departure, considerably to our relief, for we did not wish to be implicated in this wild district in a case of insubordination.

This was the last Afshah encampment we visited, and our work being terminated to our satisfaction, we bade adieu to our cage homes and hurried back to the comfort of four walls at Adana.

J. THEODORE BENT.

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LOVE IS ENOUGH.

WHAT tho' the Skyes be graye,
And dark the air,
Sullen the Daye,
So that my Love be fayre?

What tho' the Daye be brief
And long the Night,
Withered the leaf,
So that my Love be bryghte?

What tho' the Wind be loud,
And rough the sea,
Threat'ning the cloud,
So that my Love love me?

What tho' the Sunne be fayre,
And soft the Wind,
Buxom the air,
So that my Love's unkind?

What tho' the Daye be long
And brief the Night,
Nature a song,
So that my Love be light?

What tho' the Breeze but sigh,
And still the shore,
Cloudless the Skye,
So that my Love's no more?

M. C. E.

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THE ROMANTIC EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF MISS CHARLOTTE O'MARA.

BY HANNAH LYNCH.

THE question that greatly pre-occupied the minds of that lucky circle in which heiresses and eldest sons abound, was why Miss Charlotte O'Mara had never married. She was still a very attractive woman, and in her youth must have been lovely. Ungilded beauty is not inevitably pressed to mate itself, but Miss O'Mara was, owing to a large inheritance from a wealthy father, and the timely death of several near relatives, unwedded or childless, enormously rich. The world is less disturbed by the unmated condition of a wealthy bachelor, and less anxious to account for it by some law that will not prove its discernment at fault. It is taken for granted that the man should prefer to remain unmarried as long as possible, and there seems to be no disposition to limit his preference for freedom to a period defined by years. It has a smile and a shrug for the many ladies deprived of the substance by the alluring shadow of a fortune, to the half of which one of them is assuredly entitled.

But the world thinks differently when unshared wealth remains, by a perverse freak of fortune, in the hands of a woman. The noble sex, in the person of the possible suitor, regards itself defrauded, insulted, mocked at by the Jade that sits aloft and capriciously controls the destinies of man. Even extreme personal ugliness is understood to be an inadequate explanation of an unexplainable fact, and so there is nothing to fall back upon but the worn-out theory of early plighted troth and broken faith, of a blighted youth and a perfidious or dead lover. The aggrieved sex clings to romance to spare its pride, and winks and smiles contentedly at an explanation that soothes it, while admitting its natural and conquering predominance.

But in the case of a person like Miss Charlotte O'Mara, it was extremely difficult to sustain a faith in youthful sentimentality.

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She was the least sentimental woman it it possible to imagine. Her dashing military friends, with whom she was very popular, called her "a jolly good fellow," and "jolly" is the best description of the broad, humorous smile that ran like light up from her handsome mouth to her violet-grey eyes, holding in their soft depths less soul than an unquenchable mirth. Boundless good-nature and splendid spirits—these were the most obvious traits of her character. There never was a woman less complex, less matter for study. You felt her as you felt a day of even sunshine, and were thereby made glad and grateful. Nobody ever heard her sigh, nobody ever saw her weep. How could a broken-hearted, middle-aged lady possibly help doing either, and is there a corner so private that prying glances will not end by penetrating?

Miss O'Mara was not by any means a particularly well-bred lady, still less a cultivated one. She had no defined tastes of any sort beyond a fixed preference for all things inferior—inferior society, inferior literature, inferior music, and inferior art. There are many of her sort, which accounts for the thriving state of inferiority. She was noisy and brusque, and, the world added, much too good-natured. Her heart, by a natural impulse, went out to all the silly young persons of both sexes who early display a genius for getting into mischief. These, like inferior people, are numerous, and Miss O'Mara's sympathies were not allowed to rust. The young fellow who lost at cards his month's modest allowance, if he cared to embark at an early age upon the road of begging, where we may say, indeed, that it is only the first step that costs, had but to carry his trouble to her, and there was his month's allowance replaced in his empty purse, and nobody any the wiser. Instead of despising the young fellow, as she ought to have done, the absurd creature attached herself to him from that hour. To a foolish girl in a scrape, whatever its nature, she proved no less helpful and kindly. In fact, there was not to be found a being too reckless, too abandoned, too wicked, to merit the good services and sympathy of this imprudent millionaire.

But this does not explain why Miss O'Mara was unmarried. Unsentimental, unromantic as she was, there had been, however, an episode in her life that had left an indelible impression upon her, and perhaps had much to do, as well as a native perversity, with her marked preference for wild and unlucky youth. I desire to confide this little story in secret to a discreet listener, and I

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cannot do better than select the public. Thus I shall have spared a private individual the pain of breaking a confidence, which is inevitably the result of a secret communicated to Brown, Jones, or Robinson, or their respective wives.

I.

The Comte de Vallincourt inhabited a handsome hotel in the Rue St. Dominique, that is, handsome from the historic point of view, but very sombre, very uncomfortable, and very large. His wife was dead, and he was the sole guardian of a lad of ten. He liked his son as he liked all virtuous and natural facts—in a distant, unenthusiastic way; thought that children in moderation should be born, and was willing that his own should be instructed in moral precepts and all the virtues by somebody else. Jean Jacques, or some other enlightened philosopher, seemed to believe, as far as he could understand, that the country was the proper place for the expansion of the youthful intelligence. Personally he could not imagine anything expanding in the country but landscape and live-stock, and as he had but a moderate admiration for either, he was glad to remember the existence of a distant relative, the Abbé of Joinville.

This excellent man undertook the education of little Ferdinand, and taught him what he certainly would not have learnt in Paris, to say his prayers and respect the Church. He taught him other things, too, Latin and Greek, and made him familiar with the century of Louis Quatorze, in which the good Abbé lived, not because it was a century steeped in the odour of sanctity certainly. But man is born inconsistent, and holy persons, even abbés of the most excellent ecclesiastical worth, are not exempt. When he had read his page in the 'Fathers,' or recited his verses of the 'Great Century,' Ferdinand was allowed to run about the fields, make friends with shepherds and poachers, shoot and ride, and grow up to be a lively and amiable young fellow, not disturbed by the clamour of pronounced vices or virtues. He neither felt that he was born to run away with somebody's wife, nor restore the Bourbons to the throne of France, though he could imagine circumstances in which it would be pleasant to be carried off by another man's wife, and had not the least objection to see the Bourbons reigning.

Every Easter he stayed for a fortnight with his father in the sombre hotel of the Rue St. Dominique, and sniffed awhile the intoxicating breath of the boulevards, his senses opening uncon-

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sciously in the hot-house of graceful vices and enervating scents, which the city of the world may too well be called. His father treated him with all the complimentary courtesy that Parisians bestow upon well-bred provincials, observed and listened to him in the spirit of sarcastic amusement, and in the summer visited him at Joinville, where he occupied his leisure agreeably in ridiculing the natives, mystifying the country ladies by an exaggerated court, and in discoursing philosophy and the century of Louis Quatorze with his worthy host.

When the Count of Vallincourt made the acquaintance of Mr. Herbert Busshey, a sympathetic and cultivated Irishman, like himself a widower burdened with the care of an only son, he volunteered to propose the charge of the boy to his cousin, the Abbé of Joinville. Mr. Busshey was a man of expensive and reproachable tastes. Paris and widowhood suited him exactly, and he preferred to look back upon, or distantly forward to, life in the Emerald Isle. He had a moderate appreciation of landscape, however green, and none at all of shamrock, however moist and delicate, and, awaiting translation, was resigned to an establishment in Paris. Thus it was that Charles Busshey and Ferdinand, Vicomte de Vallincourt, studied and sported together, greatly to their mutual advantage, and behind their tutor's back confided to each other an insufficient faith in the greatness of the great Louis.

Charles was a steady, studious lad, fond of sketching and dreaming. Ferdinand, very much less studious and steady, was an affectionate and rather exuberant boy, and was sincerely attached to his Irish comrade. He unburthened his soul to him without any invitation, made him the confidant of his real or fancied love affairs, which, if innocent, were numerous, and thought it singular that Charles had in turn nothing of a like nature to communicate to him.

"Is it to conceive a youth so cold-blooded as this Charles?" he would sometimes burst out, when he had extracted from Charles the humiliating fact that the Prefect's wife in her latest Paris bonnet had not wrought him to a frenzy of adoration, or that the invented favours accorded his dashing suit by the subjugated spouse of the Mayor, had left him with eyes insufficiently dilated or a twist of lips insufficiently expressive of envy. Whereupon the young Viscount would retire, affronted by the wounding reproach of a silence he could not understand. He did not scorn to spy his friend, and lay traps for him to discover the meaning of

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his unfriendly reticence, suspecting a dark and criminal passion, and finding no hint of tragedy or thwarted romance, shrugged his petulant little shoulders and muttered—"Imbécile!"

Not that Charles knew nothing of dreams of romance and goddesses. He invariably wondered that the highway of life, which he was beginning to travel, offered him so little reason to hope that it was still the custom for goddesses, or at least fairies, to descend on earth and woo mortal young men who had too much soul to waste their transports on mortal maidens. The companionship of a rascally little French lad made it impossible for him to escape an excessive pre-occupation upon this great question of existence,—for the word "femme" pervaded all Ferdinand's thoughts and speech, as it pervades the literature of his country. Charles naturally thought much of love, and looked eagerly forward to the hour of complete servitude, but not for the world would he have willingly incurred the ridicule of his unromantic comrade by imparting to him his vague disappointment. Instead, he discoursed to his own empty heart in bad verse, which he wrote in all mystery and secrecy of a crime, and began a novel upon the model of the immortal 'Musketeers.'

When the lads were transferred to Paris, their respective fathers were so satisfied with the conditions of a prolonged and expensive bachelorhood, that the young men were allowed the inestimable privileges of separate establishments, and were not invited to render an account of their actions, tastes, or expenditure to anybody. While ignorant of much, they naturally thought themselves wise in all things, and both were passably crude. Charles, dreamy and reserved; Ferdinand, impertinent, fatuous, and the soul of good-nature. Charles rented a pleasant flat on the first floor in the Rue de Babylone, looking out upon a lively grass-plot, where French and foreign nurses stroll, and babies play all day long. He believed he had a vocation for French art and French literature, and began by collecting pictures and books. The enchanted young Viscount furnished a really delightful *entresol* in the Rue de Clichy, and here it is hardly necessary to say that he lived other than the life of a saint.

The wise youth in Paris is regarded as irredeemably eccentric, and while deeply attached to "ce cher Charles," his friend spoke of him everywhere as a kind of harmless lunatic, to be met any morning moving along the *quais* with a quantity of moth-eaten *bouquins* under his arm, and the distracted look upon his face of a poet in search of the unfound rhyme, which made it none the less

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impossible for the expansive Ferdinand to live without his dear Charles. While the Irish youth avoided, in horrified disapproval, the orgies of Ferdinand and his band of young reprobates in the *entresol* of the Rue de Clichy, the Viscount was never happier than when lying on a sofa in the Rue de Babylone, eloquently entertaining his friend with an analysis of his private feelings, his loves, his animosities, his vengeances, and his betrayal of the husbands of Paris amongst his acquaintances. He could discourse in one breath, and with equal fervour, upon his sainted mother and his last mistress, shedding tears over the virtues of the one or pouring curses upon the absent head of the other, if he happened to be in the vein to lament her perfidies rather than apostrophise her charms.

I have hinted that Charles was not at all the cold-blooded sage of twenty his friends were disposed to regard him. He was extremely fond of youthful female society, adored waltzing, and was considered by the young ladies of the British Embassy to waltz divinely. But his social theories were undeniably crude and uncivilized, and he could not adapt himself to the recognized fact that young girls are made to be looked at, and married women to be courted. He asked nothing better than to talk the legitimate amount of nonsense permitted between well-bred young persons of both sexes, thought it a charming distraction from his leisured studies of books to sit out on stairs and study leisurely a pretty profile, or examine the stars, or trifle with flowers and fans in congenial society, and in whispered tones. The simple-minded barbarian clung to the traditions of his benighted race, and regarded it as the privilege of his age to flirt with attractive young ladies, and his duty to respect the married women, whether he was acquainted with their husbands or not. And this in Paris, where the only recognized social drama consists of three *dramatis personæ*—your friend, your friend's wife, and yourself! It is not wonderful that in a circle of bragging young sinners and polite rascals of high-life, he had the air of an early Gaul or a South Sea Islander. He received the confidences of his male friends in sceptical credulity—that is, he believed that not one of them was to be taken seriously in his account of his abnormal successes with the pursued sex. But while deducting what he considered to be a grain of truth from their embroidered romances under the name of "bonnes fortunes," he believed each to have made considerable havoc of marital peace and security. These sort of conquests did not commend themselves to his taste, and he was

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not conscious of a vocation for intrigue, deception, and occasional warlike encounters in Belgium and elsewhere with outraged husbands.

One evening the two young men went together to a ball at the British Embassy, equally disposed to accept the agreeable fact that here, at least, young ladies may be freely invited to waltz and exchange the amenities of social intercourse without the expectation on the part of male relatives or mammas of a declaration of non-existent sentiments and serious intentions. Entering the ball-room, Ferdinand reviewed the fair in one of his rapid glances, charged with impertinent alertness and the spirit of scientific discrimination. He took no pains to lower his voice in imparting his opinions on the faces and toilettes to Charles, who was too familiar with his views to discover their originality, though he was not old enough to be aware that the subject is wanting in freshness.

"*Tiens!*" he cried, with quite a novel note of interest in his voice, "I see a sensation already. There's a sparkling creature, if you will, Charles, my friend. Is it wickedness or merely animal spirits that underlies that virginal brilliance of glance? A heart-whole Juliet or a possible Cleopatra? I announce beforehand that I am at the feet of either. I must begin the siege forthwith."

Charles followed the direction of the young man's much too expressive eyes, and saw indeed a splendid nymph, arrayed in the traditional robe of purity, but exhibiting none of the traditional reserve of her age. A lovely girl dropped from the rain-clouds of distant Hibernia, a vision of amazing contrasts! violet-grey eyes heavily lashed, and almost black from excessive shadow; hair so dark, that a blue gleam seemed to run along its surface; and tints of red and white so pure and rich, that Nature herself might well wonder at her own production. This brilliant young creature was the centre of a group of laughing youths and maidens, wildly entertained by her sallies. And the ring of her laugh was heard above all.

"What a beautiful girl!" said Charles, staring.

"I leave you, my friend. Until my conquest is secure, I am on fire. You will see me in flames when I approach her," cried Ferdinand. "Lady Myers," he said, addressing his hostess blandly, "do me the honour to present me to that adorable young person, who looks as if she intended to enslave all male Paris."

"You mean Miss Charlotte O'Mara," said Lady Myers, with

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the least possible movement of her brows that somehow conveyed the fact to Ferdinand that the young lady in question was an incomplete edition of high-bred maidenhood. There was a shade of interjection in her voice as she added, "An Irish heiress," that piqued the Viscount's curiosity, and caused him to scan his partner inquiringly when he bowed to her upon introduction. Unintentionally, perhaps, Lady Myers had, in pricking his curiosity, without at the same time diminishing his ardour, given an offensive colour to his thoughts, and the beautiful Miss O'Mara was to him from that moment an object of legitimate but hardly respectful pursuit.

Miss O'Mara was an inexhaustible dancer, and Ferdinand's manner of waltzing with her had all the air of an elopement. People stopped to look at them in amazement, and somebody remarked that it wanted but the groom and the charger outside to complete the suggestion of Lochinvar. Ferdinand did not usually waltz in that way with young ladies; but Miss O'Mara was naturally unaware of this fact, and missed nothing of the flavour of homage in his attitude. She was frankly delighted with her partner, and her face sparkled to his ecstatic glances.

The waltz over, he stood in front of her and fanned her, finding her still more delicious as she panted from the rapid movements, and her laughing, melting eyes were not abashed by his. She was not the type of girl a Frenchman could be expected to understand. He misinterpreted her audacity, and her indestructible purity eluded him. The clear voluptuousness of her violet-grey eyes dazzled and warmed him like wine, and he read their language by his premature knowledge of women who are not in the habit of innocently wasting such looks.

"Decidedly she is enchanting," he said to himself, while they sought rest from the dance in wild chatter that completed the intoxication of the whirl. "That *scélérat* Charles is right when he chants me lyrics on the beauty of the daughters of Erin. *Tudieu!* if they are all as facile and beautiful as this frank young woman, for little would I seek re-baptism and an alien nationality, and make myself a barbarian to live the blessed life of a sultan in the midst of rain and shamrock."

The innocent girl suspected nothing of her partner's impertinent dissection and his cruel classification of her. She was neither refined nor fastidious, and so long as men were willing to entertain her and not stint her in the admiration she demanded, she was willing to dispense with their respect. The Frenchman

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charmed her. She liked his name, and above all she liked his exciting manner of dancing. The moment he placed his hand upon her waist, she felt as if she were being carried off, and imagined she was instantly going to be whirled into the middle of a romance. She was pleased and flattered by the exuberant admiration he was able to convey in the subtle management of his brows and eyelids, in the movement of his shoulders, and the way he had of bending his body. Everything about him breathed a candid mixture of good nature, fatuity, and high spirits that found her sympathetic to the verge of comradeship.

Later, she was made acquainted with Charles, who had spent the evening staring at her from afar, with his soul in his honest blue eyes, too abashed by the novelty of his own sensations to make any overt effort to approach the superb creature that had dazzled him, until Ferdinand, unapprehensive of an alienated conquest, insisted on introducing him. Miss O'Mara had an opportunity to note that Charles waltzed much better than his friend, but as a partner he left her unexcited and impalpitating. He did not lift her off her feet, and his perfect measure was tame after the fury of the Viscount's steps.

As may be imagined, the two young men went back to their respective apartments, distracted and incoherent. The Viscount was lyrical, Charles was silent, and both made no secret to themselves or to each other of the fact that they were violently in love. It was a lesson in good nature to see how amiably Ferdinand pitied his less glorious companion, and how frankly he pointed out to him the absence of chances for him; "afin," as he explained, waving his hands, "qu'il n'eût pas d'illusions perfides." Charles ruefully admitted to himself the justice of his friend's views, as well as the fact that perfidious illusions are in their way very pleasant things.

The next day, while Charles was breakfasting on a cup of coffee and a big cigar, the Viscount burst into his room upon voluble exclamations and with moving eyebrows.

"You see me an altered youth, my boy," he cried, flinging himself down on a sofa. "I have been sage this night. I left the amiable Mademoiselle Charlotte, and reposed myself on my bed to meditate upon her charms. The circle, play, the *cafés* knew me not, and I resolved to keep my glances from all creatures less divine than she. Say, if I have not reached desolating depths of passion in one night. But she," he added, smiling rapturously and kissing gloved fingers to an imaginary

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object, "is all fire and flame. She is, frankly, a devil, and I count not on her for any conventional wooing."

Charles pushed away his chair from the table with an angry look, and broke out ill-temperedly—

"Please remember, Ferdinand, that you are not talking of a French girl."

"No?" said Ferdinand, in impertinent interrogation.

"You may not respect the women of your own country—possibly with good reason. But you are speaking to a man who honours the women of his country, and in speaking of one of those women, you will do me the favour to adopt a more respectful tone."

"I am not versed in the ways of Irishwomen, my friend, but if the captivating Mademoiselle Charlotte is a fair specimen, she leaves us no illusions upon the modesty and reserve of her compatriots. Not that I regret it. But when a charming young creature stands before me, claiming with her eyes and lips anything but my respectful homage, you must not expect me to prostrate myself reverently before her and mistake her for a near relative of the Virgin Mary. I have no illusions upon the fair sex, nor would you, had you philosophically measured our tormentors. Mademoiselle Charlotte is like the rest, a delightful temptation, yearning for Adam."

II.

Charles sulked and kept away as much as possible from the Rue de Clichy. Instead, he regularly frequented the Bois de Boulogne, in the morning on horseback, in the afternoon driving a neat dog-cart. He religiously followed the monotonous procession in the Allée des Acacias, and examined every Amazon and the girls' faces in each carriage, in the hopes of finding Miss O'Mara in the fashionable crowd. He looked for her in the theatres, and never refused an invitation, always with the secret object of dancing with her, or if there were no dancing, of carrying her an ice, and picking up her glove, or handkerchief, or fan. In fact, Miss O'Mara entered into his life, and her image pervaded each walking and sleeping hour. All night he dreamt of her, and all day he sought her and meditated upon her. Sometimes when they met she made him happy, more often she left him miserable; but he hugged his misery as part of his bliss, and wrote grateful sonnets to her, which neither she nor the public ever saw.

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Meanwhile the public voice was dangerously busy with the reputation of Miss Charlotte O'Mara. Her very innocence was suspected as a snare. Innocence, it was said, and we know said unjustly, could not possibly exist with an audacity of speech, and look and action so reckless. She shocked all the proprieties, trampled under foot all the conventionalities. She liked the society of young men, and—she was at no pains to conceal the fact—liked flirtation and dancing upon perilous brinks, and was resolved not to be stinted in that kind of entertainment. She did not see why Nature should give her a pair of very beautiful eyes if she was not intended to use them destructively or otherwise. Consequently, she used her eyes and her lips freely, cast about with superfluous generosity observations of questionable taste, and made her entrance into a circle a matter of fluttering interest. All the men arched significantly and crowded round her, and all the women smiled dubiously and observed her.

Amongst her assailants and captives she met her match in frank and unconventional impudence in the Viscount of Vallincourt. He delighted her nearly as much as she delighted him —with a difference, however. His sallies amused her, while their hidden meaning escaped her; hers thrilled and emboldened him, reading in their innocent rascalities suggestions the poor child would be the last to understand. They played at battledore and shuttlecock upon sentimental ground for the benefit of the on-lookers, and occasionally lost their heads, while constantly menaced with the permanent loss of their hearts.

Some of Charlotte's improprieties scandalised the Viscount, which fact left him none the less a willing abettor. I am afraid his mind was not quite clean. In the privacy of his chambers he formed all sorts of plans for her ruin that, had the innocent creature suspected the least of them, would have lifted the hair on her head, and sent her into fits for a week. To her he was simply a comrade, who had the virtue of being of the exciting sex. To shock and mystify society in partnership with the Vicomte de Vallincourt, was greatly more thrilling than to incur its displeasure in company with another young girl. And then one never knew the moment the pair of sinners might not present themselves at the bar of condemnation, and purchase their pardon by a romantic confession. While she was simply enjoying an escapade that placed them in exterior social rebellion, he was asking himself if he might venture to embrace her, and for some undefined reason to his own consciousness, such is the subtle

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strength of purity, he generally ended the inward debate by pressing rapturous lips to her hands, one after the other.

One evening they met at a wealthy Russian friend's, who had an establishment in the Avenue of the Champs Elysées. It was an afternoon party, where the young people were permitted a pleasant freedom, and where all sorts of innocent and noisy games were resorted to as a means of more intimate introduction. Among the revellers, Charlotte and Ferdinand were the noisiest; and poor Charles watched them from afar, moody and meditative, filled with jealousy and the most poignant of lover's miseries. He heard her laugh, was abashed by its heartiness, and overcome by the difference between such honest laughter and his own complicated pain. There was so much of the child in this rowdy young flirt, who arched provocation at men, and flung them audacious challenge from eyes of heavenly hues, that while his judgment condemned and his heart ached, his manhood yearned to cover her from a critical and undiscerning world. He knew to his sorrow how her actions, her words and glances were interpreted; knew that Ferdinand's friends laughed cruelly at her, while anxious to compete for her favours; knew that the women of her circle shrugged behind their fans at the mention of her name, and viewed her behaviour askance. And yet to this noble young fellow she was whiter than snow, of the unstained innocence of an infant playing unconsciously with peril and shabby toys. To him it was not she who was at fault, but a carping and impure society, pressed by its own evilness to the worst conclusions, and by reason of its own battered and blackened mind, incapable of distinguishing radiant white from grey. This bird of bright plumage flew from its snowy heights and the sunlit plain of unthinking girlhood to skim the muddy waters of the social stream, and perhaps get broken in its shallows; and there was none but him to understand her—no clean and honest hand ready to save her from her own indiscretion and ignorance but his—the hand she rejected because proffered so seriously, because there was neither laughter upon his lips nor challenge in his eyes.

Meanwhile the cause of his trouble had burst away from the groups inside, and was standing out on the terrace, leaning against a pillar, looking down upon the wide avenue. The setting sun had flung upon the city a golden dust which broadened to a thin brilliant dimness—if one may risk the description—towards the Place de la Concorde, and concentrated

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itself at the point of the colossal Arch of Triumph into a thick heavy veil, flung from tree to tree, behind which carriages and persons dropped invisible, and from under which the procession rolling from the Bois had the air of emerging brightly from the clouds. Ferdinand was beside her, with his back to the world outside, holding and crumbling the long ribbons of her dress, and watching the delicious shades and tints of her variable face, his own expression one of warm admiration.

"Why does your friend look so glum?" she asked, moving to the edge of the terrace, and folding her arms upon it.

"We are embroiled," he said, dropping the ribbons to lean beside her, till the upper half of his arm touched hers, and a thrill ran fire through his veins.

"He is more serious than you, my friend," she laughed, nnocently unaware of the threatening volcano near her.

"Not so, adorable girl. Serious, yes; in that he does not like amusing supper-tables. The last time he supped at my chambers he found we drank too much wine and spoke too much about women. My faith!—woman is the crown of man's life, the reason for which we live."

As he spoke, he approached his face to hers; he nearly touched her silky dark hair with his eager lips, and slipped his arm lightly round her waist. Instead of the conscious look and the yielding droop he expected, the girl reddened proudly, and put up her hand to remove his arm. Her gesture was decisive, but not in the least angry. She accepted the fact that her defiance of law and order involved accidents of this sort; but had no doubt of her own power to extricate herself without a quarrel or a scene.

"What a delightful thing to be a young man and have jolly suppers and all sorts of pleasure!" she said; and again she leant against the pillar as a protection from the encroaching male arm. "I wish you would invite me to one of your suppers!"

"You! True? Oh, if a goddess would preside!—but you mock me. You would not come."

"Give me the chance," she laughed.

"It would be an escapade worth all the others. But, alas! it is impossible. There are things one must not want," he murmured, sighing.

"M. le Vicomte, there is nothing impossible when we have spirit and youth upon our side. Thus it is arranged. You invite me to a young man's supper party to-morrow night in your rooms in the Rue de Clichy, and behold me of yours. It

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matters not how I arrive. I may jump out of a window when my respectable household sleeps, and dreams of heaven and all things good. I may have a fairy godmother, who will evolve a carriage out of a pumpkin, and coachmen out of white mice. I may have the cap of fortune or the cloak of invisibility. *Enfin*, it will suffice that I intend to come."

"Mademoiselle, I am your humble servant," said Ferdinand, bowing, and smiling very queerly.

"And you will have a charming party, remember—only nice persons, gay and amiable, and you will all drink wine and smoke cigars, and talk just as if I were a young man too?"

"We will drink wine and smoke cigars, and talk just as if—no, my faith! We will not forget one instant that you are a beautiful young person, and we will spend the night making our devotions on bended knees at your shrine."

"Be it so. Now name your guests."

He ran over half-a-dozen names sufficiently reassuring as to the extreme elegance of the party.

"And what ladies?"

"*Dame!* I can't say," Ferdinand replied, fairly puzzled. The ladies who would be disposed to come he could not invite to meet her, according to the eccentric social theory which permits snowy maidenhood drawing-room and domestic contact with the most ruffianly of the sex that can destroy it, and holds it spotted if one of its own maculate sisterhood but smiles upon it.

"But why any ladies? A divided sovereignty means anarchy. One queen and all her subjects. Is not that the ideal kingdom? You preside, with no lesser impertinent star to distract our attention, and we, your slaves and adorers, drink to you on our knees. Each will bring flowers to make a carpet for your charming feet. We will break lances beneath your eyes, and you will proclaim the wittiest your knight."

The girl was enchanted with the sketch of the banquet, and was disturbed in the act of childishly clapping her hands by the cry, "Charlotte! Charlotte!" and the distracted appearance of a stout lady, who blinked weak eyelids at the setting sun, and seemed to entertain the notion that her dinner, or her coachman, or her husband would run away from her if she did not hasten after them.

"Till to-morrow evening," said Charlotte, arching significant brows at the dazzled youth.

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"Till death!" said Ferdinand, dramatically, as he pressed the little gloved hand she held out to him. Before disappearing down the terrace she flashed back upon him a brilliant smile, showing white teeth, and a ripple of light that ran up from her arched lips to her eyes, where it glimmered beneath the shadowy lashes.

"Decidedly she will go far, that one," said the Viscount of Vallincourt to himself, partly stunned and pleasurably horrified by the conspiracy in which he found himself involved, apprehensive of consequences and dubious of the entire correctness of his own attitude. She was very young, and possibly very ignorant of life and its meaning; she was a girl destined for marriage and honourable establishment. Ought a man of honour to allow her to compromise herself so irretrievably upon these desperate impulses? On the other hand, was it his duty to check her? "*Tudieu!*" he muttered, "it is for her to decide, and not for me." But, when he entered the *salon*, he felt unable to meet the honest grieved face of poor Charles, felt inexplicably tarnished, as if he had just cheated at cards, or perpetrated some nameless cowardice for which he could not be legally punished.

He made his exit, murmuring words of indistinct adieu, and rushed down the stairs, anxious above all things to avoid his friend, not averse to the prospect of a draught of champagne as a pleasant oblivion and a night of dissipation to complete the narcotic.

III.

Charles Busshey spent a restless night, and awoke vaguely unhappy and depressed. He would not allow himself to understand that jealousy was at the root of his unhappiness, because that admission involved an acceptance of the fact that he had fresh cause to suspect, if not a definite engagement between Miss O'Mara and Ferdinand, at least a declared mutual affection. Had he not greedily watched those horrible twenty minutes' absence of both on the terrace, and noticed the peculiarity of each upon return to the *salon?* Charlotte's slightly reddened cheeks and excited glance, Ferdinand's uncertain half-intoxicated air, and his overt avoidance of the friend whose accentuated pain he knew was his gain. This inability to meet his eye, this hurry to get away from his presence in silence were proofs of Vallincourt's loyalty and love to poor Charles, and, as such, a partial redemption of suffering inflicted in his triumph, but oh! the

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heaviness of certainty! Love, a faded dream; friendship, a memory; and the future all emptiness!

He could not leave his rooms all day. He shrank from the streets, loathed the thought of food, forgot even to smoke. Joyous sounds revolted him, and bright sights shook every nerve-thrill. He kept the outer shutters closed, and lay like a forlorn and forsaken child on the sofa of his *salon*, unable to read or think, envying women their tears and men the refuge of the wine-cup. Towards evening, though without any inclination for dinner, he began to think it would be a sort of dreary distraction to go down to his accustomed *café* and make a pretence of dining, if only with the object of killing time. It surprised him much that Ferdinand did not find it a necessity to burst in upon his solitude, and insist in his exuberant fashion on sharing his joy with him, and twice he had been so badly tempted to rush to the Rue de Clichy and know the worst beyond all possible doubt, that he had risen and half crossed the room in search of his hat to go out. But each time he had fallen into the nearest chair, profoundly discouraged and dismayed by the thought of certainty. Would it not be worse when he knew at last that there was no more chance for him, that hope was dead and friendship henceforth a mockery?

His dinner was, as he had anticipated, a pretence. He drank some cognac with his coffee, and lit a cigar for company in a stroll along the river. From a stroll the press of conflicting thoughts insensibly drifted him into a hurried walk and then almost to a race. River, streets, avenues, and boulevards, were all unnoted by his vague glance as the pavements flew beneath his feet. He went like one in an ugly dream, pushed by fatality to fly. He would have liked to run in that energetic and unthinking fashion through all the empty years ahead, and drop into the last long dreamless sleep at the end. But at length exhausted muscles began to drag, and he understood that he had walked off his delirium.

He looked at his watch. It was just eleven. Without realizing what he was doing, or stopping to ask himself what he meant by it, he yielded to the passionate desire for news from Ferdinand, and hailed a *fiacre*. At the Rue de Clichy he jumped down and asked the *concierge* if the Vicomte de Vallincourt were at home.

"Oui, monsieur," briefly said the *concierge*, who had drawn the cord, and stood frowning at him sleepily in the archway of her own room.

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When the Vicomte's servant opened the door, he stared at the visitor in visible suspense, and, half holding the door, said that M. le Vicomte was in the *salon*.

Charles pushed past him and rushed into the *salon*, where he found Ferdinand on his knees in the midst of elaborate floral decorations.

"Thou!" cried Ferdinand, looking up displeased, and breaking short the stem of a lovely rose in his evident vexation.

"I disturb you in the midst of festivities, I see," said Charles, leaning against the door, and surveying him with a displeasure far more marked than his.

"Yes. A goddess presides at my little feast, and I do my possible to honour her, as you perceive."

"I should have thought that the moment had come for you to abandon these sort of entertainments."

"This is the moment that gathers them into one glorious burst, my friend. Have a care, Charles, I beseech you. You are trampling on my loveliest rose, and those flowers are meant for daintier feet than yours."

"So this is a bonfire of extinct passions burnt in honour of the latest," sneered Charles, and as he spoke, a fury of indignation shook him, and he stamped ruthlessly upon a branch of white flowers.

"It is to see that you are a barbarian, unfit for the society of nymphs and angels. Yes, this is a bonfire. I bury dead passions and cover the mortuary car with roses, and in the smell of flowers and the rosy glamour of the grape I renew my eternal allegiance to the little God of Love, the sole divinity that rules my life. I proceed to toast their immediate successor. Is not my *salon* a perfumed paradise? Here we take coffee and sing and sigh at the feet of the presiding goddess. Throw a glance upon the dining-room, friend Hamlet, and then, I pray you, depart. We like not the melancholy Jacques, nor the meditative Hamlet at our *noctes Ambrosianæ*."

"Ferdinand, is this the measure of the love you offer her?" Charles exclaimed, pressing the joints of his fingers together painfully, white about the lips.

Ferdinand stopped in his decorative labour, and swiftly ran a finger along his upper lip, twisting one side of his face into a comic leer and narrowing his dark eyes into a rascally impish slit.

"No tragedy, my friend. I am in a joyous vein, and I pray

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you, take your sepulchral countenance and your declaiming attitudes to the vast solitudes of the street of Babylon. It is my way to love, simply."

Charles made a mechanical movement towards the door, and then suddenly wheeled round. His eyes flamed like blue gems, and his lips were trembling. He held out both hands like a woman when she is deeply moved to prayer.

"Ferdinand, think of her and love her differently from the rest. Make your manhood a protection and not a snare for her. Do you see, Ferdinand, you understand her not—and I do. She is all innocence through her wildness. A lily is not more white, a kitten not more thoughtless. Oh I will love you, if possible, with an affection surpassing that of our boyhood, which knits us two together so inextricably, if you will but save her from herself, from a condemning world. Look into her eyes! are they not pure? And you can think of nothing but laughter and shabby thoughts when you are beside her. If she loves you, it is you who must have her; but oh! be good to her, be tender, care for her, and see that others respect her. She—she is a child, and she thinks not of the things that occupy men's minds and older women's too. We are very little, after all. It is only the children that are great and honest. They live by nature, and the others live by art. That is why a child like Charlotte, who is taken for a woman, is so cruelly misunderstood by the others. They measure her by their own mean stature, and cannot see how shrunken are their dimensions beside her. But you, Ferdinand, you love her and you must understand her. Do nothing, say nothing, think nothing to-night unworthy of her. So that she find happiness in your love, and you in hers, I am willing to efface myself from your lives and forget my own pain. Do you hear me, Ferdinand? Promise!"

The volatile Viscount felt horribly moved by Charles's earnest prayer. It preluded his little feast by a sharp prick of remorse, and for a moment he underwent the sensations of a gentleman stained and dishonoured. The romantic side of his friend's passion appealed to his sympathy, solely from the dramatic aspect, for his senses were too alert and governing to permit of any real acquaintance on his part with the clouded bliss or impersonal devotion of romantic love. His own was like most Frenchmen's, the reverse of romantic, but he vaguely realized the beauty of the more ideal feeling.

"My poor Charles!" he cried, with honest tears in his eyes,

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and in another moment he had flung his arms round his friend's neck and kissed him effusively on both cheeks. Recovering himself, he hastily looked at his watch and implored—

"Go now. It is after eleven, and I expect immediately a band of sinners whose society you will not find the most congenial. Go, I pray you, at once, my friend, and to-morrow we will seriously discuss this matter. Bah! I am not the monster you apprehend. Good-night."

There was a ring outside, and a dissipated dog under a glorious name made his appearance, carrying a magnificent bouquet.

"Eh bien, Vallincourt! et notre belle Irlandaise?" he laughed gaily, kissing his primrose-gloved fingers.

"Chut!" cried Ferdinand, frowning.

Charles frowned too, reading in the words a disrespectful allusion to Ferdinand's engagement.

"Thou seest? I have brought her the handsomest bouquet all Paris can furnish," the other continued.

"Pose it there. Charles, my friends will be as disappointed as I that a villainous tooth should keep you from our midst. But hasten home, *mon cher*, and rub your face with oil of camphor."

Another ring, and enter another dissipated aristocrat, carrying an enormous bouquet.

"Say, my friend," he cried, "if your beautiful Charlotte will not thank me prettily for these flowers."

"You should have sent them to her house and not brought them here," said Ferdinand coolly, and getting behind Charles made a despairing gesture for the benefit of his two guests.

The men seized his meaning, and explained their singular remarks by some ready invention that did not quite allay Charles's suspicions and swelling anger, but left him hopelessly mystified. As soon as the distracted Viscount had got him as far as the hall, a third guest arrived, and upset the harmony of the gathered.

"Well, Ferdinand, has she come, your little fiend of an Irishwoman? I have brought her a diamond flower-holder, and expect her to choose me, you understand."

"*Peste!* you are a fool, D'Auvrigny!" roared Ferdinand.

"What! what!" cried D'Auvrigny, dismayed, and looking eagerly from one to the other. "Are we not invited to entertain the beautiful Miss O'Mara at a bachelor's supper-party?"

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"Vallincourt, is this true?" Charles demanded.

"There, since you must know it, Charles," Ferdinand replied, flinging out both hands in decided acceptance of the situation.

"You have invited Miss O'Mara here at this hour to meet these men at your supper-table?" Charles still interrogated, in a dull, heavy undertone.

"I have. And, what is more, she arrives," Ferdinand protested sulkily.

"My God! my God! To terminate thus a friendship of ten years," poor Charles muttered, clinging to a last shred of tenderness for Ferdinand, as he looked him steadily in the face, and then approached, and struck him full between the eyes.

The Viscount staggered back, and before he could recover himself, a light step and a joyous laugh were heard outside, and in another instant Charlotte stood upon the threshold, a picture of roguish, innocent beauty, like an escaped school-girl who has jumped the orchard wall and stands on tiptoe to climb the nearest fruit-tree. Everything about her proclaimed an arch and delicious consciousness of crime. Her sweet red mouth widened in a little nervous laugh, as she looked from Charles to Ferdinand, and rapidly caught the three heads behind them. Charles's heart ached as he returned her half-questioning look, and saw how lovely she was, how fresh and untroubled, half scared by the enormity of her escapade, but, from very ignorance and honesty, incapable of distrusting one of these men in whose power she placed her honour, herself, as unhesitatingly as if they were a band of light-hearted schoolboys. She wore a dress of cream cashmere trimmed with lace and cream ribbons, and from her shoulders hung loosely, open at the throat, a long black silk cloak with a hood, pink-lined, that partly covered her dark head, the pink contrasting bewitchingly with her hair and the bright tints of her face.

"Miss O'Mara, will you do me the favour to allow me to escort you home?" said Charles, advancing.

"If you are very entertaining and witty during the supper, perhaps I shall," she said, smiling.

"I mean now, this instant. You should not be here."

Miss O'Mara drew in her mobile brows haughtily and turned to her host, who bowed and held his hand to her, with the other making a movement to remove her cloak. There was a red mark upon his olive face, and still holding her cloak, he said to Charles:

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"M. Busshey, I shall have the honour to communicate with you early to-morrow. Do me the pleasure to retire."

"I will not—that is, not without Mademoiselle. We Irishmen are not in the habit of treating young ladies like ballet girls, nor of allowing other men to so treat them. I take the opportunity of calling you, in the presence of Miss O'Mara, the meanest of cowards, and her worst and most pitiless of enemies. Child!" he cried, in an altered tone, which showed that every fibre of pity and yearning love was stirred within him, "what can you know of men, of these men? Trust me, you do yourself an irretrievable wrong in being here. You are still on the threshold of M. de Vallincourt's rooms. Come away with me now, and even he, base as he may be, cannot say that you have been in them."

Ferdinand drew in his lips viciously, and without a glance at Charles, said to Miss O'Mara very courteously:

"Mademoiselle, do not consider me in this matter. You are permitted at this moment to choose between Monsieur Busshey and me. M. Busshey who, calling himself my friend, takes the advantage of your presence to insult me. He wishes for your society, and your favour, and he feels himself protected in seeking it thus—like a brave gentleman!"

"Vallincourt, the breach between us is wide enough. It is a puerile want of taste to seek to widen it by unworthy words. Miss O'Mara, will you come with me?"

The frightened girl stood looking at the two alienated friends, opening and shutting her eyelids swiftly, as if a strong light hurt them. She dimly realized the situation, but had a horror of being thought a coward. Having defied society in coming, and accomplished all the minor perfidies involved in an escape from her guardians at eleven o'clock at night, in a stormy and baleful city, like Paris, she was ready to stand fire rather than retreat, with only the dangers incurred, and the joys of her crime untasted. All her secret sympathies were with Charles, whose manliness she respected, and whose disinterested devotion she gratefully admired. But to go with him meant silent submission to reproof, meant the acceptance of inferiority and rebuke, meant, in a word, the resignation of girlhood's natural sovereignty, and the possession of a mentor. Her pride revolted from the step. She preferred the questionable homage of Ferdinand and his friends, preferred the intoxication of peril offered by them than the security of Charles's respect. With a decisive little

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gesture of her hands and her charming head, this perverse girl said—

"M. le Vicomte, I came here upon your invitation, and it is my pleasure to stay. Good-night, Mr. Busshey."

He felt dismissed, humbled, and bleeding inwardly to death. He still stood before her with his eyes in her eyes, compelled her glance in one steady long last look, and yielded.

"Vallincourt," he said, turning to the Viscount in one more generous effort. "Be honourable, be a gentleman. Save her, if she will not be saved by me. It is not too late even yet. My God! I beg you, I implore you!"

"Mademoiselle," said Ferdinand, offering his arm. "These gentlemen have brought you flowers which they desire to offer you. Pasquier, show M. Busshey out."

Charles and Ferdinand did not see each other again for two days, when they met one raw, damp morning in Belgium. It was their last meeting, and no word was spoken by either, until Charles fell back into the arms of his seconds, shot to the heart. Ferdinand, perverse as he was, was good-natured and affectionate, like a child. All his love rushed back upon him, and he was on his knees, kissing the dying young man's hands, first one and then the other, and through his choking sobs begging his forgiveness and friendship.

"Poor Ferdinand! We have been good friends," said Charles, in a thin, far-away voice.

"The best, Charles, the best," sobbed the torn and remorseful lad, with his cheek upon the other's breast.

"Then for my sake, as well as for her own, be good to her, be faithful and tender. And when you are married to her, tell her how much I loved her."

But Charlotte O'Mara, as we know, did not marry the Vicomte de Vallincourt. The news from Belgium closed her heart to lover's love, and for six months she wore mourning for the lover she had loved too late.

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TEMPER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "LETTERS FROM THE BALTIC."

THERE are words in constant use and of great significance in our English tongue of which the precise equivalents are not to be found in other languages. The conclusion therefore is, that the things they represent belong, in greater degree, to ourselves than to other nations. Of such current words we may instance three: "fun," "humbug," and "temper." It is not by any means that the things they represent do not exist elsewhere, but they certainly do not flourish so hardily as with us. All these three things, little as they have in common, are in practice and thoroughness intensely English. Much might be said of the two first. Our business, for the present, is with Temper.

If asked to pronounce what is the grievance which enters most deeply into the daily life of a large proportion of our countrymen and women; one worse to endure than poverty or pain; a moral East wind, nipping and withering the fairest home-promise, and especially the young shoots and buds unfolding to the sun; the real secret of the greatest unhappiness of the greatest number—we answer at once it is that hateful thing called Temper. Most justly and logically may that be defined as the greatest curse of the English race which destroys that domestic happiness which is its greatest blessing. Man and woman depend far more on each other than upon health or wealth, or any outward circumstances, for such well-being as they can enjoy in this imperfect world. The Temper of the ruler of a family is the sure prognostic of the lot awaiting those dependent on him, whether the easy chair, the soft couch, the plank-bed, or the rack. Just as *le style c'est l'homme*, so is the temper the man or the woman who happens to be drest in a little brief authority. And as this said Temper never hesitates to deal hard words to all within its reach, so must it be content to hear a few truths about itself.

Whatever the occasion or whatever the excuse, Temper may be said to be always selfish, always ill-bred, often cruel, some-

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times brutal; the indulgence of one, and the misery of many; the freedom of one, and the bondage of many; claiming an amount of elbow-room sorely at the cost of others; more uncertain than an English spring; more obstructive even than an Irish M.P. These definitions might be multiplied for ever, for there is no subject in the world to which it is more difficult to give its full due. But they may be all summed up in one definition of terrible import, namely that the real mainspring of Temper is the pleasure of giving pain. Paraphrasing Satan's awful line, "Evil, be thou my good," Temper has, as it were, said to itself, "Pain to others, be thou my pleasure." Who does not know something of Temper either as anvil or hammer? It rules "the Court, the Camp, the Grove." It pervades History; it, in great measure, governs the world. Occupying thus so large a space in Society, it conforms conventionally and necessarily to outward laws and habits; attends to business, dines out, travels on the Continent, and goes to church. It therefore requires rather a practised eye for the bystanders to detect the knot in the wood under the varnish, the scowl under the smirk. Some of its qualities are even worthy a better cause. Endless in ingenuity, inexhaustible in resources, and economical in working, for one hammer dexterously swung will hit a good many anvils, it accommodates itself to every place, from the cottage to the palace. Not but what Temper, in the long run, is an expensive indulgence; it breeds quarrels, divides families, alienates friends, sacrifices character, and sullies honour; to say nothing of the loss both of time and money; though far too fascinating to be abjured on that account. Even the homes of work and want will contrive to afford it, just as they do Drink; though for obvious reasons it flourishes in greater perfection in homes of luxury and leisure, and even of education, where it is the greater discord and disgrace. Especially do the worst forms of Temper show their supremacy in the power they possess of enhancing every other ill to which flesh is heir. There is no misfortune so trying but Temper will contrive to make it worse. Milton well knew that Temper entered the world hand in hand with Sin, when he makes the unhappy couple at once adding to the bitterness of their fall by turning on each other with reproach and recrimination:

> "Thus they in mutual accusation spent
> The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
> Till of their vain contest appeared no end."

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Alas! how many a heedless, ill-regulated pair have since then followed their example!

As we have assumed that the rather exclusively English word Temper implies a partially English monopoly of the thing, it is as well to look into the terms and characteristics of neighbouring nations.

The French, for instance, say a man is *de mauvaise* or *de vilaine humeur*. But a humour is not a chronic condition. The Frenchman, it is true, can fly into violent passions, and stamp and storm, foam and spit, like a bad actor overdoing his part; he can also pout and sulk, and give off petty shocks of electricity, if handled awkwardly; but he loves and needs the company of his fellow-creatures far too much to keep up this kind of thing long; accordingly, if Frenchmen soon quarrel, they also soon embrace and forget it all.

The German possesses plenty of the thing both in the violent, the surly, and the tetchy form; especially in the last named. Nor does he agree, like the Frenchman, quickly with his adversary, but takes his time, and eats and drinks, sleeps, smokes, and sulks phlegmatically and leisurely on the offence. He has, however, no exact term for the thing. His beautiful word *Gemüth*, as untranslatable as the Frenchman's *Esprit*, implies a sentimental state of mind which a German can best explain. Our English word "character" supplies his want. The man who has *ein schlechten Karakter* is not a person of bad reputation, but of evil disposition.

The great distinction between the tempers of these two nations and our own is mainly owing to the absence in their case of that domestic sphere where domestic peace or strife is best developed. For this there is no place like the genuine English "Home." But what the German lacks in this respect is amply made up to him by another institution peculiarly his own. That tremendous Prussian army, more German than the Germans, of which we hear so much, is as much the exercise ground for Temper as for sham fights and endless manœuvres. Those who know how the officers treat the men so unhappy as to be under their command, are well aware that nowhere can Temper be studied in a more active, unmanly, and brutal form. One consequence is that among no given number of men is the percentage of suicide so appallingly high as among the privates of the Prussian army, where the average is four times higher than elsewhere in the civilized world.*

* See 'Études sur l'Empire d'Allemagne,' par J. Cohen, 1879.

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The best apology we can now offer our foreign brethren for dealing thus unceremoniously with their infirmities is to be more candid still about our own. They will be ready to admit that we are the oddest nation in the world, and that our tempers are our greatest oddity. Our native flora in this respect is the most luxuriant under the sun; almost defying classification. What with our political atmosphere and our domestic climate, we contrive to produce the largest and hardiest varieties. Every species that freedom and wealth, eccentricity and privacy—especially the latter—can foster, flourishes with us. There are the crochety and the fidgety tempers—both intensely national—which, perhaps, irritate more than they actually harm. There are the suspicious, the sulky, the nervous, the "nasty," the perverse, the pigheaded; all, more or less, difficult to deal with; there is the temper on the surface, easily roused, which is best let alone to wear itself out, and there is the deep-down temper which one must travel with, or marry, to fully find out. Boycotting is no new invention of the National League. Temper discovered that cowardly device long ago, and its victims can tell of having been ruthlessly sent to Coventry, which is the favourite domestic form, for years and years. Finally, there is the *post-mortem* temper, to which we shall return.

We have said nothing of a rather familiar sort, namely the hasty or passionate temper—the last being only the first, full-grown. But this kind can hardly be ranked under the same genus as those we have endeavoured to describe. Passion and Temper are two very different and even opposite things, both as to means and end. Passion's real intent is to exhaust and expend itself, Temper's to wound and distress another. Passion is blind and deaf, and knows not what it does when the fit comes on; Temper has all its wicked wits at its deliberate call and command. Passion, heedless of self as of others, rushes forth to the fray, like the Spartan Isadas, unclothed and almost unarmed; Temper sits cool, collected, and malignant in its own fort of intense selfishness; Passion may be almost defined as a physical ebullition, relieving a pressure. But it is, at best, a dangerous remedy, apt to leave what is irrevocable and irreparable in its course; a something to haunt the culprit for the rest of his days, and, although forgiven by others, never forgiven by himself.

Neither may Anger be confounded with Temper, though it too often is. Both spring, it is true, from the same root, but only in the same sense as medicine and poison. Temper is always mean-

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ness, more or less—a bully when it can be one with impunity; a coward when it cannot. Anger, viewed in its highest purposes of defending the weak, redressing the injured, and vindicating the slandered, is one of the noblest weapons man can wield. An English schoolboy with fine instinct defined Temper as "a sneak," and Anger as "a trump," and he hit the nail on the head. Scripture acknowledges both the rights and the limits of Anger. "Be angry," but "sin not. Let not the sun go down on your wrath."

Our Lord never hesitated to be angry, when occasion required. He was angry with the Pharisees when He called them "a generation of vipers." He was angry with His disciples when they forbade little children to come to Him. He was angry with Peter when he presumed to question what He foretold. But who can detect the slightest symptoms of Temper in His sternest reproofs?

Anger, like fire, is a good servant, but a bad master. The first condition, therefore, for its useful and legitimate exercise is perfect self-control; Calmness and Scorn are its rightful lieutenants. "A man in a passion," as that wise woman Sarah Coleridge says, "cannot scorn." The popular expression of "losing temper" is not strictly true. The Temper we endeavour to describe is unfortunately never lost; its chief aim is to make others lose theirs.

We have thus far impeached imaginary defendants, under the generic name of "Man," but it would be a grave mistake to assume that the accusation, like the term, was not meant to include both sexes. Each is wonderfully and curiously made to be equally the blessing or the plague of the other. Especially is this the case in that connection which draws them closest together. Women are credited with a greater use of that organ designated in the Psalms as "a sharp sword." At the same time there is such a thing as a male *silence*, which may be made as exasperating as the utmost female volubility. It would be difficult, perhaps, in a conjugal duet to decide which best succeeds, whether in taking the lead or in keeping it, the deep growl of the bass, or the shrill dissonance of the treble—the broadside of the man, or the spiteful thrust of the woman; and we are disposed to think there is not much to choose between them. One extreme form of the sad disease there is we have still to touch upon, which is essentially of the masculine gender. The part here played belongs in the nature of things to the one who is the stronger, generally the older, and generally the holder of the purse-strings. *A-propos* of this exceptional form, it is well known that

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the animal world furnishes the same phenomena of Temper which prevail among the human race ; if not in the same variety, yet in its worst species. The most noble, intelligent, and tractable of the quadruped order occasionally sends forth a more vicious and untamable brute than any other that the wild denizens of forest or jungle can supply. The "Rogue elephant," always a male, be it observed, is so incurably savage towards its fellows, that the herd at length turn upon him and drive him from their midst. We have, alas! our human "Rogue," but there is not the same necessity to chase him away. He is sure to isolate himself and his unfortunate family where he can work his sovereign will without let or hindrance from his neighbours. The class of temper we mean—fortunately for human nature, rare—and the restraints of society are incompatible elements. The man who loves society is safe from the worst forms of temper. But there is no country where, for various reasons, men live so much out of the world, and where families, accordingly, are cast so closely together for better and for worse, as in our England—where, in short, within legal limits an individual can do so unrestrainedly as he likes with what he calls his own. That an Englishman's house is his castle, is in such cases no figure of speech, but a very awful fact. Unless he transgress the law, no one can enter it, or deliver from it. If within that impregnable fortress it be his chief pleasure to render his family miserable, who can prevent him? All depends upon what constitutes his own happiness, for he will only seek that. The solution of the terrible problem is that there are men, heads of families, who love their tempers better than wife or children—than duty or religion—than man or God. Not all observers of human nature have come across such specimens, but those who have had the misfortune will endorse what we say. Such men have exaggerated ideas of the paternal "Right divine." They erect it into an article of faith, and implicit obedience on the part of their unhappy family into the chief end of that family's existence. There may be conjugal and even filial struggles occasionally, but after awhile the machinery works smoothly ; the wife never wills, never orders, never rebels ; nor do his children, in the sense of attaining independent action, ever come of age. His will is understood to be their sole and sufficient guide, law, and fate. It has been so in the past, is so in the present, and shall continue so in the future. There is, of course, no love for him in such a home. If wife and children are too Christian to hate him, they are at all events too human not to

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dread him, and perfect fear casts out all love. Having thus created a moral paralysis by extinguishing all will but his own, he is perfectly happy, and calls it peace. It is this frightfully wicked happiness which is his curse, for it shields him from all the consequences of his sin. Other sinners suffer penalty. The drunkard has his headache, and certain pangs of conscience follow other forms of ill-doing. But the human "Rogue" does not even suffer inconvenience. He takes care to behave well to his servants, and in every external relation of life. He can be courteous, and even charitable, excepting always in the place where charity is supposed to begin. A man of this sort is called insane by the few who know the truth, but he knows far too well what he is about for any medical certificate to that effect to be obtained. Such homes may be environed with objects of luxury and refinement, and yet be the abodes of the most sordid hardships and the most withering terror. "One sinner destroyeth much good."

For all Temper, of whatever kind or degree, there is, humanly speaking, but one cure, and that is a worse. Crotchets, fidgets, nerves, sulks, even passion are wonderfully subdued by compulsory contact with worse crotchets, fidgets, nerves, sulks, and even passion. Shakspeare shows his knowledge of the human heart by making Petruchio possess a worse temper, or pretend to possess it, than Katherine. But the poor "Rogue" has no such chance left to him; not that one as bad as his own, or even worse might not possibly be found. But granting this, the cure would not be applicable, for each would be sure to give his rival a wide berth.

Charitable people will not fail to remind us that health has much to do with the symptoms we have been describing. Sir Henry Thompson says that "a man's temper depends on whether he digests his food well or ill." And, again, "an incompetent digestion engenders habits of selfishness and egotism;" but this polite, professional excuse does not apply to our "Rogue," whose strength is generally that of an ox, and his digestion that of an ostrich.

We hasten to conclude this uncomfortable chapter. But before so doing we must enquire what are the means existing for a cure —for the cure above mentioned, even if possible, is only temporary. The man possessed by that temper, which we have had the candour to own is a national malady, is as much to be pitied as the victim of any implacable, chronic disease; or, still worse, of

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another terrible national propensity. The drunkard, between his bouts of drink, suffers intensely from depression, self-disgust, and returning thirst. In the few instances recorded of a cure, how has that cure been effected? He has perhaps taken the pledge, and the religious principle involved has given him the strength to keep it. But in his case certain counter-irritants have helped. He has been treated medically as well as spiritually. His drink being, as in most hospitals, cut off at once, tonics, and other innocuous stimulants have been provided which partially allay the craving. But the examples are not exactly parallel; for the one loves his temper far more than the other his drink. The drunkard knows that he is wrong, and is wretched; the Temper always thinks himself right, and is supremely happy. The one is as free as the other to take a pledge virtually between himself and his God, but, in the nature of things, he is less likely to do so. Supposing, however, for supposition's sake, that the Temper really does wish to conquer his enemy, what palliative is there in store for him? A very simple one, we reply. As the sin consists in the pain which his peculiar form of pleasure inflicts on sentient objects, so the counter-irritant is found in directing his evil weapons against non-sentient objects. It makes all the difference whether your lash falls on wood or iron, or on shrinking flesh. Let the owner of a temper fume and foam at countries and states—at Prussia, or still more at Russia—let him storm, stamp and snap at institutions, corporations, or even at Parliament. Let him point his malignant insinuations, his meanest sarcasms, his most virulent misrepresentations at clubs, at circulating libraries, at the Stores, or at Whiteley's shop; let him even level his worst tit-bits at newspapers, reviews and magazines, always scrupulously avoiding contributors, editors and publishers; but let him keep clear of that something in the human breast which is apt to wince at studied provocation and insult. It it true this course will deprive him of the best part of his sport, but it will also save him from its consequences. A little perseverance in this direction will weaken the demon, even if it does not cast him out.

It may be remarked that no man or woman is entirely known until their last will and testament is published. This tells what life may only have partially disclosed, and sometimes takes the world by surprise. But the last will of the wretched "Rogue," with its careful *post-mortem* entailment of his worst tyranny, takes no one by surprise; least of all his victims. And so the poor

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creature departs this world with the comforting conviction of having riveted the chains which it was his life's delight to forge. Or, who can tell! with a sudden "looking for of judgment," too late to avert, on which it is not for us to dwell.

It is the daughters of such miscalled homes who enlist our tenderest sympathy. What help is there when those "household laws" which should act for their shelter are turned against them? Who can protect them from their natural protector? The sons go forth for education and employment, and so partially escape; but the women remain to bear the burden of the day. All pine and fade; one or more die. Of those that weather the life, some of the loveliest of earth's saints are made. They stand too high for our compassion. That is best reserved for those unhappy beings who have so perverted the instincts of Nature.

And have we no word to say for the other side of the medal; for that so-called good temper which is in truth no temper at all, but rather a blessed combination of fine heart, noble self-control, and religious principle, which seeks the highest good of all beneath its rule? Homes thus governed do not depend, whatever some may think, on the amount of the income, but are found under lowly rulers who labour in the sun and rain. Whoever has seen a good man, greeted by his rejoicing children on his return from work, has seen what a heart can never forget. And if such happiness can dwell in the cottage, how much more in the mansion, where parental ambition can fulfil its highest and tenderest aspirations? But do such fortunate families always realize that they are fortunate? Do those favoured children always love, honour, and obey in the same proportion that the oppressed ones tremble, dread, and despair? The answer is disappointing. Favoured children, screened from every rude breath, are, on the contrary, though unconsciously and irresponsibly so, the least grateful of the human race. Sometimes, it must be added, the least dutiful; for there is always the risk that the tenderness which casts out their fear, will also cast out their obedience and their respect. It is a strait and narrow way which maintains parental authority without false indulgence or undue harshness, and there are not many who find it.

Finally, comes the thought which will obtrude, and must ever obtrude on all who attempt to reason on themselves or on their fellow-creatures—the thought, namely, of the differences of disposition between all who dwell here below—of the varying amount of moral and intellectual capital with which all enter

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this life, and toil through it—differences entailed by causes unchosen by them, and strengthened or modified by surroundings equally unsought by them. Each alike in general outline of Sin and Suffering; each separate in those qualities which make the Individual. Here we touch that mystery which human nature can acknowledge, but never comprehend—the mystery of Evil. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"

Robert Burns' immortal words give the best secular answer to these involuntary questions.

"Then at the balance let's be mute,
We rarely can adjust it;
What's done we fairly may compute,
But seldom what's resisted."

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SOCIAL BATH IN THE LAST CENTURY.

BY MRS. A. PHILLIPS,

AUTHOR OF "BENEDICTA," "MAN PROPOSES," &c.

CHAPTER IV.

IN the midst of all this pleasant fooling away of life in Bath—which, to an observer fresh from an unfallen world, must have resembled very much what the mock heroics of the insane represent to the sane person in our own sphere—in the midst of all this stilted ceremonial, duelling, gambling, card-sharping and dissipation generally, there ran another current of thought and action, highly disturbing and in direct opposition to it all. It appeared in the influence and efforts of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, a lady of high descent and extreme Calvinistic views. Bath was one of her important centres, from whence she issued many of what John Berridge styled her "Vatican Bulls" to the preachers whom she sent to all parts of the kingdom to arouse the sleeping nation from its ungodly slumbers; she being, as he once dared to tell her, "more of a pope than a mother in Israel." But libel as her cruel creed was upon the Divine goodness, she is to be credited with the utmost sincerity.

Charged with such a creed as Calvin's, could Lady Huntingdon do less than she did? She passed through the city of Bath as elsewhere, sounding the tocsin of impending and eternal doom; alarming and arresting, by her preachers, all those insensible beings who are only to be reached through fear, and who now sat—Nero-like—fiddling, while the citadel of their immortal souls was in danger of everlasting burning. So long as a possibly "elect" fellow-creature could be snatched from the flames, could she eat, drink, and be merry with the rest! She had the courage of her convictions. They were terrible, and, in the light of higher truth, untrue; but some diseases need

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stringent remedies. The fire of Lady Huntingdon's spirit was no doubt a cleansing one, and suitable for the social purification of the circles she strove to evangelise.

She was at all times a remarkable woman; high-spirited and determined. An undaunted energy characterized her spiritual warfare against the follies of the world, and the deafness of the majority to the clamours of conscience. She possessed a wonderful influence over people of her own set. Even the termagant Duchess of Marlborough was subdued by her, and writes confidingly: "Your concern for my improvement in religious knowledge is very obliging, and I do hope that I shall be the better for all your excellent advice. God knows we all need mending, and none more than myself! I have lived to see great changes in the world—have acted a conspicuous part myself—and now hope, in my old days, to obtain mercy from God, as I never expect any from my fellow-creatures." Speaking of one of Whitfield's sermons she missed hearing, she says: "it might have been the means of doing me good; *for good, alas! I* DO WANT! but where among the corrupt sons and daughters of Adam am I to find it? Your Ladyship must direct me. You are all goodness and kindness, and I often wish I had a portion of it. Women of wit, beauty, and quality, cannot hear too many humiliating truths—they shock our pride. But we must die; we must converse with earth and worms."

In another letter she writes: "I hope you will shortly come and see me, and give me more of your company than I have had latterly. In truth, I always feel more happy and more contented after an hour's conversation with you, than I do after a whole week's round of amusement. When alone, my reflections and recollections almost kill me, and I am forced to fly to the society of those I detest and abhor. Now there is Lady Frances Saunderson's great rout to-morrow night; all the world will be there, and I must go. I do hate that woman as much as I hate a physician; but I must go, if for no other purpose than to mortify and spite her. This is very wicked, I know, but I confess all my little peccadilloes to you, for I know your goodness will lead you to be mild and forgiving, and perhaps my wicked heart may gain some good from you in the end. Lady Fanny has my best wishes for the success of her attack on that crooked perverse little wretch at Twickenham."

The crooked little wretch here alluded to was of course the poet Pope, the friend of Ralph Allen. To speak more correctly,

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Allen was the friend of Pope; for Pope's friendships were, as Mr. Leslie Stephens has remarked, only "decorous fictions," as Ralph Allen found to his cost. But in the early days of their intimacy Allen could not apparently do enough to express his admiration for Pope's genius. He was liberal, both in money and hospitality, and gained in the end but one solid return, the unswerving love and friendship of Warburton. This came about through Pope, and was the result of an accident. Warburton, who started in life as an attorney's clerk, was a man of wide reading and culture, and, as all the world knows, became one of the leading theologians of his day. Keen and unsparing as a critic, he was at the same time so subtle in argument that he could find a reason for praising what at first he blamed; as when he veered round, and after condemning Pope's "Essay on Man," suddenly went on the other tack, and praised the poem, simply because a French critic had abused it. Pope loved him for this, and sought his friendship. Warburton meanwhile had entered the Church, and was a Lincolnshire parson when the accident arose which brought him to Bath. Pope was on a visit to Ralph Allen at the time, when he received a letter from Warburton, proposing to spend a few days with him at Twickenham. This was awkward, as Pope did not want to leave the hospitable roof of Prior Park, where he was made so much of, and yet he did not want to miss Warburton. He was embarrassed, and Ralph Allen, who was present when Pope read the letter, asked him the cause of his perplexity. Pope told him, and the difficulty was at once solved by an invitation from Allen to Warburton to join the party at Prior Park. It was thus Warburton paid his first visit to the splendid mansion he was destined later on to inherit.

Living with Ralph Allen at the time was his niece, Gertrude Tucker, with whom Warburton fell in love, and of whom he wrote as "one of the finest women in England, to whom to offer up his freedom was to be more than free!" No doubt! It was a fortunate day for Warburton when he first met Gertrude Tucker, as through his marriage with her he succeeded Ralph Allen at Prior Park, and inherited the greater part of his property; while there is very little doubt that he owed his preferment in the Church to Allen's influence with Pitt.

We get a pleasant glimpse of Mrs. Warburton from Mr. Cradock, who describes her in his 'Literary Memoirs' as "a most agreeable woman with engaging manners, who seemed to feel particular satisfaction in recounting the many excellences of the

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Bishop; now and then dwelling upon some ludicrous circumstances as well as more serious ones. Mr. Cradock and his wife frequently met Mrs. Warburton in Bath, and as they grew more intimate, Mr. Cradock ventured to tell her that Dr. Hurd (Bishop of Worcester) always wondered where Warburton met with certain anecdotes, with which not only his conversation, but his writings abounded. "I could readily have informed him," replied Mrs. Warburton, "for when we passed our winters in London, he would often, after his long and severe studies, send out for a whole basketful of books from circulating libraries; and at times I have gone into his study and found him laughing, though alone; and now and then he would double down some entertaining pages for my after amusement."

Warburton was a stout foe to Methodism, and was at issue with Lady Huntingdon and the "enthusiasts," as he called her and her following; for, according to Warburton, a Christian needed the ladder of the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy in order to climb up into heaven. The discussions between Lady Huntingdon and himself at Prior Park were characterized by all the warmth usual to dogmatic opponents.

Lady Huntingdon's appearance in Bath was no less upsetting to Nash, as upsetting indeed as the cry of "fire" to an audience comfortably seated and enjoying the play. To stir up the sediment of Nash's conscience was a proceeding he found highly objectionable! It threatened to interrupt rudely the harmony of his arrangements. When Nash therefore heard that John Wesley was about to preach in Bath, he made up his mind to take strong measures and put his foot down.

It was only right and proper that he should rid the city of such a fanatic. Religion, no doubt, he argued, was an extremely good thing on occasions, and in its proper place—in church, at death-beds, and so on—but to have it interfering with the all-important ceremonial of the Pump-room and Assembly Rooms, to say nothing of the gambling-tables, was intolerable! Nash accordingly went down to Avon Street, where Wesley was to preach, in a room, to Lady Huntingdon's recruits—her chapel not yet being built. Entering the room before the congregation had arrived, he went up to Wesley and asked by what authority he was acting. He put the question in his capacity of King, whose duty it was to see that the happiness of his subjects was not rudely attacked. But Wesley was not overawed, and replied that his authority was given him by "Jesus Christ, conveyed by

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the Archbishop of Canterbury when he laid his hands upon him and said—'*Take thou authority to preach the Gospel.*'"

Nash, however, affirmed that he was acting contrary to law. "Besides," he added, "your preaching frightens people out of their wits."

"Sir," replied Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?"

"No," said the Master of the Ceremonies.

"How then can you judge of what you never heard?"

"By common report," said Nash, stoutly.

"Sir," said Wesley, "is not your name Nash? I dare not judge of you by common report!"

The rebuff told home, and Nash, finding his position in the meeting-house and in the Pump-room were not exactly the same, withdrew considerably crestfallen.

But when a woman of title turns Evangelist and gathers all the aristocrats of a city round her, she becomes more or less a fashion, and from any fashionable circle Nash was not a man to be excluded. If the subject were uncongenial, the aroma of aristocracy, while listening to it, made it endurable. Nash was, therefore, a frequent guest at Lady Huntingdon's prayer meetings, and was once induced to sit out a sermon by Whitfield. The cry of "Saul among the prophets," uttered by his gay associates, soon killed Nash's nascent piety. They congratulated him on his conversion, and unmercifully rallied him on having turned Methodist. Verses were written on her Ladyship and Nash, which were fastened to the walls of the Pump and Assembly Rooms, while printed notices were circulated in every direction, stating that "the Countess of Huntingdon, attended by some saintly sister, purposed preaching at the Pump-room, and that Mr. Nash, henceforth to be known as the *Rev. Richard Nash*, was expected to preach in the evening at the Assembly Rooms. It was hoped the audience would be numerous, as a collection was intended for the late 'Master of the Ceremonies,' who was retiring from office."

To Lady Huntingdon this satire was a matter of perfect indifference. Not so to Nash, who could never again be induced to go to Lady Huntingdon's meetings; a pity this, as he was horribly afraid to die, and his alarm and apparent repentance whenever he was sick, was such as to recall the familiar couplet concerning the Prince of Darkness when similarly afflicted.

A very striking picture of Lady Huntingdon in Bath is given by Mrs. Shimmelpennick, the Port Royalist, whose mother, one

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of the Quaker family of Barclay, was in Bath at that time. She describes a scene that took place one morning in the Pump-room, which was crowded at the time with a fashionable and distinguished throng. Into the midst of this assembly came a humble, simple woman of the Society of Friends, and began an address to all present on the vanities and follies of the world, and the insufficiency of dogmatic without spiritual religion. The company, startled by the novelty of the intrusion, paused in their talk and seemed utterly confounded. What did it mean? Nevertheless they kept silence and listened. She grew earnest as she proceeded, and as she denounced their darling follies there were heard sounds of resentment floating from mouth to mouth, that finally broke out into groans and hisses.

But among the throng, sitting in the seats set apart for the titled, was a lady with a stern, yet high-toned expression of face and of distinguished bearing. Her piercing glance rested on the speaker, as, sitting erect, she listened to every word. When the company began to hiss and groan, and manifest their displeasure by beating their sticks on the ground, with cries of "Down! down!" this lady rose from her seat, and with dignity made her way through the crowd, who formed an involuntary passage, down which she walked with stately steps. Going up to the speaker, she said, in a solemn tone of voice: "I thank you in my own name and in the name of all present for the faithfulness with which you have borne your testimony to the truth. I am not of your persuasion, nor has it been my belief that our sex are generally deputed to be teachers in public, but God who gives the rule can make the exception, and He has indeed put it into the hearts of all His children to honour and venerate His commission. Again I gratefully thank you."

Side by side with the woman, to protect her from the fashionable savages who had begun to intimidate her into silence with their cries of "Down! down!" did this Lady—Selina, Countess of Huntingdon—conduct her humble sister to the door of what must have seemed to the unwelcome herald, the portal of a fashionable Inferno.

Lady Chesterfield—a natural daughter of George I.—was one of Lady Huntingdon's most devoted adherents; not so Lord Chesterfield. He was a connection of hers, but she never succeeded in making him a convert. He was one of those men who worship "good form" above all gods. He never ridiculed or assailed Lady Huntingdon's religious opinions. On the

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contrary, metaphorically speaking, he "raised his hat" to them, like the perfect courtier that he was, but he was impenetrable to all assaults of conscience from within, or exhortations from without. They glanced lightly from off the polished steel armour of his perfect self-possession and immorally-toned soul. In his heart he thought Lady Huntingdon a mad woman, and took care that her son, whose guardian he was, should not take after her, or inherit her craze for chapel-building and itinerant preachers. At the same time we hear of Lord Chesterfield and the young Lord Huntingdon as being present on several occasions when Whitfield, who was Lady Huntingdon's chaplain, preached in Bath. This he often did, and always at the house of a Mrs. Bevan.

Lord Chesterfield admired Mrs. Bevan. She was clever, had studied the deistical writers of the age, and could argue with his Lordship on this, his favourite topic. She easily and solidly refuted his plausible objections to revealed religion, but she writes from Bath to Lady Huntingdon to tell her that "Lord Chesterfield's inclinations to subvert Christianity had involved him in many inconsistencies." She then proceeds to give the nature of their arguments, and how Lord Chesterfield showed that he was reduced to the last distress by his general clamours and invectives against all historical evidence. At other times he would agree with her, declaring that never were any evidences more clear and convincing than those which attested the Divine origin of Christianity. Knowing Lady Huntingdon's anxiety to make a convert of his Lordship, Mrs. Bevan enters minutely into the subject in a lengthy letter, from which the above is a brief extract.

Lord Chesterfield's influence over Lady Huntingdon's son was pernicious to the end, and this excellent woman had to mourn over the infidelity of her child. As is too often the case, the influence that could rescue those at a distance was powerless at home.

As Lady Huntingdon's opinions and Methodism gained ground in Bath, and were represented by a chapel which was and is called by her name, she drew upon her following, if not upon herself, the implacable enmity of that "saucy prelate," as Walpole calls him, Warburton, who, as Bishop of Gloucester, wrote to one of Lady Huntingdon's preachers in the following manner:—

"I shall insist upon your constant residence in your parish, not so much for the good you are likely to do there, as to prevent your rambling about in other places.

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"Your Bishop and (though your fanatical conduct has almost made me ashamed to own it) your patron,

"W. GLOUCESTER."

While talking of Lady Huntingdon, a letter of Lord Chesterfield to her on the subject of her preachers is worth quoting. It is dated June 18, O.S. 1749.

"Really there is no resisting your Ladyship's importunities. It would ill become me to censure your enthusiastic admiration of Mr. Whitefield. His eloquence is unrivalled—his zeal inexhaustible, and not to admire both would argue a total absence of taste, and an insensibility not to be coveted by anybody. Your Ladyship is a powerful auxiliary to the Methodist Cabinet; and I confess, notwithstanding my own private feeling and sentiments, I am infinitely pleased at your zeal in so good a cause. You must have twenty pounds for this new Tabernacle, whenever you think proper to demand it—but I must beg *my name* not to appear *in any way*."

Lord Chesterfield was in Bath when Mrs. Shemmelpennick's mother, already referred to, was a child there. They lived near each other; the Barclays having a house in the South Parade. He was very fond of this little girl, and would often play with her, frequently choosing her as his companion. He was an old man at the time, as it was not long before his death. The child amused the weary courtier, who seemed to enjoy exchanging the hollow intercourse of the heartless world for the freshness of this little girl's society. "Nothing," we are told, "could exceed his kindness to her." In after years she remembered and described his notice of her as "exquisite in tact, delicacy and polish."

Among the most remarkable instances of Lady Huntingdon's power over wicked people is her meeting with a celebrated woman living then in Bath, who accosted her one day in the street and asked her where she was living. Lady Huntingdon stopped and spoke to the old lady, but forgot to ask her name, yet arranged to see her when she called. They parted, and Lady Huntingdon saw and heard nothing further of the stranger until a year later, when she received a letter handed to her by Viscount Tyrconnel, the nephew of the old lady in question, entreating Lady Huntingdon to visit her, as she was at the point of death. She reminds her in the letter that she had accosted her in Bath, but was unable to call, as it had been arranged, in consequence of her having been seized with a serious illness the very next day.

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"I thought I should have died," she writes. "Even now, whilst I write, shuddering horror steals over me at the recollection of what I then endured from the terrifying apprehension of an alarmed conscience: when you call to mind some transactions in the life of the miserable individual who now addresses you, perhaps you will recoil with disgust from any association with a being so depraved and so debased. But oh, dear madam! recollect for a moment that I am touching my last hour, and that the prospect is as dark and dreary as the tomb to which I am rapidly hastening! I tremble, yes, my knees smite against each other, at the apprehension of the sentence I must receive at the awful tribunal before which I must so soon appear."

This letter was signed "Anne Brett," *ci-devant* Countess of Macclesfield, and known as the unnatural mother of Richard Savage, who was at the time languishing in gaol at Bristol where, for a debt of £8, he ultimately died, and was buried at the expense of his gaolers. It is an interesting revelation of the mind of a cruel woman, whose vice and inhumanity were so instrumental in the ruin of her unfortunate son. It shows also the influence Lady Huntingdon had gained in Bath as a Court of Spiritual Appeal in the minds of those whom conscience and terror had called in imagination before the Judgment-seat. Nothing now remains of the once powerful position this lady held in Bath but the painting of her name over the door of the chapel which she erected. But this serves as a lasting epitaph to the memory of a woman who was remarkable for her singleness of purpose, and readiness to sacrifice herself and her fortune for what she believed to be the service of God.

Nash, too—who seems as irrepressible in narrative as he was in life—was also trying to tread the paths of peace in another way by putting an end to duelling. He began by attacking the fashion of wearing swords among the gentlemen when in society—wily man—because it did such injury to the ladies' dresses! This was the ostensible reason; the fact being that it was not an uncommon thing to see two gentlemen in the heat of argument, or disputing over cards, or the merits of a lady, whip out their swords and try to kill each other on the spot. Nash was determined—to use his own expression—to "hinder people from doing what they had no mind to." For a long time the gentlemen refused to listen to his appeal, until a circumstance occurred which compelled them to take heed. It was an affair at the gaming-table between two men, whose names are

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immaterial now; suffice it that in the heat of dispute they thirsted for each other's blood as well as money, and adjourned for satisfaction to the Grove—it was not then, as now, called Orange Grove—where by torchlight, and under the sacred Abbey walls, they fought with swords, until one ran the other through the body, stanching the wound done to his feelings by bathing it in the blood of his enemy.

Such a transaction, under the very nose of polite society, was a shock to Bath. Hitherto, all the blood-letting for honour's sake had been carried on at a judicious distance from the city, necessitating a carriage and post-horses and postillions, with seconds and sundries, to take the belligerents to an adjacent suburb, where their ghosts could wander at will by night along the downs of Claverton and terrify only the harmless animals pasturing there. But to intrude their shades into the very centre of the town was an offence to peace-loving Nash, who took every care that the ladies should not be terrified, whether by Wesley, or ghosts, or duels, without remonstrance. So the edict went forth against duelling generally and swords in particular. Men after this were forbidden the use of swords at all in society. They might quarrel and call each other out as much as they pleased, but so surely as they did, so surely was Nash on the watch, and had them arrested for a breach of the peace.

It is time now that Pope should be seen as he flitted to and fro in Bath, where, as the friend of Ralph Allen, he played a part not at all to his credit. But then, in any judgment of Pope's character, his own verdict of himself "that his whole life had been but one long disease" must always be borne in mind. There is a tradition that a certain villa at the foot of Lyncombe Hill, enclosed in walls, was once Pope's residence, and that he used to come here from time to time for the benefit of his health; but this is open to doubt. He professed to have disliked the city, according to a letter written to Richardson, who was staying at one time in Bath, and to whom Pope writes:—"but for the news of my quitting Twitnam (*sic*) for Bath, inquire into my years if they are past the bounds of dotage. Ask my eyes if they can see, and my nostrils if they can smell—to prefer rocks and dirt to flowery meads and silver Thames, and brimstone fogs to roses and sunshine? When I arrive at these sensations, I may settle at Bath, of which I never yet dreamt, further than to live out of the sulphurous pit, at the edge of the fogs at Mr. Allen's for a month or so. I like the place so little, that health itself should not

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draw me thither, though friendship has twice or thrice." Nevertheless, Warburton gives several of Pope's letters dated from Bath—one to Swift, saying, "I have passed six weeks in quest of health and found it not." Another to Miss Martha Blount, in which he says:—"From the window where I am seated, I can command the prospect of twenty or thirty (ladies) in one of the first promenades in the world—— I have slid, I cannot tell how, into all the amusements of this place; my whole day is shared by the Pump, Assembly, the walks, the chocolate-houses, raffling-shops, plays, medleys, &c." This would lead one to believe he did occupy the villa at Lyncombe, whose upper rooms would command a view of the "walks" and the South Parade where the ladies promenaded.

Pope's famous, or rather infamous lines on Allen, whose generosity of heart and admiration for his genius had loaded the poet with benefits, are an instance of the crookedness of his nature, let his panegyrists say what they will. Allen was a worshipper of cultured men and men of genius, and when Curll published "Pope's Letters," the publication of which created so much dispute, Allen admired them so much that he longed to know the writer. With all the ardour of a generous nature, he believed that what flowed from a man's pen must needs be dictated by his heart. Without guile himself, he read in these letters—so full of benevolence and purity of purpose—Pope's real sentiments, and felt that here, at last—in a world not too bountifully endowed with them—was a fine and worthy soul! He spared no pains in seeking him out; placing his house and himself at the poet's service whenever he felt disposed to use them. Further, when Pope talked of bringing out an "authorised edition of the famous Letters, Allen begged to be allowed to bear the expense! Allen had reason to think in Pope's case as many do, that it is as well not to see one's literary gods too near, since few of them are found on closer view to be, "*pace* Wordsworth, a spirit and *an author* too;" least of all Pope, whose flow of sentiment was equal to his command of language, but whose spiritual nature partook seemingly of the attenuation and crookedness of his body. He might surely have found a more fitting word than "low-born" to prefix to his generous friend.

> "Let low-born Allen with ingenuous shame
> Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame."

How different was Fielding in his appreciation of Allen we

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shall show later on. Pope's couplet recalls the man who knocks his friend down in a joke, and is surprised to find it hurts him. Warburton took Pope to task for his want of taste, which caused him to modify the "low-born" into "humble," as there are men in the world who would prefer to commit a deadly sin to being guilty of a breach of good taste.

Miss Martha Blount, or Patty Blount, as she was familiarly called, had somewhat to answer for in the rupture that took place between Allen and Pope. Allen did nothing by halves. When he opened his house, his purse and his heart to Pope, he gave the reversion of these favours in a measure to Pope's friends. Miss Patty, whose relation to Pope was recognized as a platonic friendship, was also invited to Prior Park, with the poet. On one occasion when they were staying there together, Pope went to Bristol for a few days. During his absence, Miss Patty, who was a Roman Catholic, asked Mr. Allen to allow her the use of his "chariot" to go to service at the Romish Church. Allen was Mayor of Bath at the time, and a staunch Protestant. Popery was an offence to the nation, and there was a strong feeling on the subject in Bath. To have his chariot seen standing outside the "house of Rimmon" would, Allen knew, create a great scandal in the town and reflect upon him in his civic capacity. He regretted, therefore, to be compelled to refuse the favour Miss Patty demanded. She was incensed at this. It was an insult to her Church no less than to herself to be thus refused. So much did she resent it, that on Pope's return from Bristol, she induced him to see the offence from her point of view, and so worked upon him that they left the house abruptly together. Miss Patty, never a favourite at Prior Park at the best of times, was not invited again. To the irregularities of genius, Allen was ready to extend his forgiveness, and Prior Park was still open to Pope, if closed to his "dear friend." This, no doubt, increased Miss Patty's resentment, and she was the cause of the final rupture between the friends. It was on the last visit, as it proved, that Pope was invited to make to Prior Park, that he wrote to Ralph Allen to lend him the manor house at Batheaston, in order that Miss Martha Blount might be near him. To this request Allen sent a most emphatic refusal, which ended all further intercourse between the once warm friends. Miss Patty, according to Johnston and Ruffhead, made reconciliation impossible, by refusing to have anything more to say to Pope if he did not finally break with Allen. She carried her

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resentment, it is said, to the point of refusing even a legacy from Pope unless he cancelled his debt of obligation to Allen for the hospitality he had received, by leaving him a sum of money equivalent to the outlay of their entertainment, which they calculated at £150! It was a stroke of refined cruelty to thus make a man sting his friend from his grave. Allen received the legacy, which he paid into the funds of the Bath Hospital, remarking, as he did so:—"Pope was at all times a bad accountant, and that, unfortunately, if he had intended the legacy in the light of a debt, he had omitted to add a cipher to the amount!"

We are inclined to think that Miss Patty, also, carried her resentment across the borderland of this life, for in a most extraordinary manner, Ralph Allen's refusal of his chariot to carry her to a Romish place of worship seems to have met with a curious retaliation; as if, indeed, Miss Patty on leaving the mansion abruptly and in anger, had uttered a silent curse on its owner which is now in process of fulfilment. For not the least pitiable feature of the social decadence of this interesting old city lies in the ultimate fate of this once beautiful mansion. Instead of being as it once was the centre of a cultured sociability, it now resembles a shabby temple from which all life and light have fled, grieving silently for the "days that are no more," as if mourning that its once princely hospitalities are for ever at an end—now that it has become the property of the Church of Rome!

Shades of Ralph Allen and Warburton, only to think of it! The house which once rang with the genial laugh and brilliant epigram of a symposium of wit, beauty, and learning, now echoing only to a dry routine of education and priestly rule; and where the voice and form of woman is never suffered to penetrate, save as an implement of service! Surely it is not without reason we trace the avenging spirit of Miss Patty Blount—and possibly Pope's—in this cruel turn of fortune. For the measure of a judgment must always be weighed by its power to afflict; and to have seen the ultimate fate of his cherished home must surely have taken all the sweetness out of Allen's life, could he have known it.

At the same time, while narrating these episodes as interesting coincidences in the light of subsequent events, it is only just to Miss Patty's memory to give her side of the question, which we are able to do on the authority of Spence, who was the intimate personal friend—the Boswell, in fact—of Pope. To him Miss

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Blount declared that she had never read Pope's will; that he had told her of the part relating to Allen, and that she had tried in vain to get him to leave it out. With regard to the Allens, she said—to give her own words:—"They often invited me to their house, and I took an opportunity of paying them a visit. I soon observed a strangeness of behaviour in them. They used Mr. Pope very rudely, and Mr. Warburton with double complaisance, and me they used very oddly in a stiff over-civil manner. I asked Mr. Pope whether he had observed their usage of him . . . he said he had not, and that the people had got some odd thing or other in their heads. This oddness continued as long as we stayed."

We can quite believe it! To understand the mystery we must "*chercher la femme.*" The situation becomes clear when the characteristic antagonisms of the actors in the social drama unfold. Mrs. Allen, as hostess, was the culprit. The orthodox married woman of limited intelligence and rigid principles was no doubt scandalized that a man and woman should be so "friendly," and nothing matrimonial come of it. To Mrs. Allen's mind a platonic attachment was as incomprehensible, we suspect, as a stiff proposition in Euclid. She had an uncomfortable sense, therefore, that in receiving Miss Patty under her roof with Pope, she was openly sacrificing to the improprieties, and this would account at once for her armour of stiffness with the covering of over-civility to hide it. We can imagine her confiding her scruples to Warburton, the excellent Churchman, whose orthodoxy had passed into a proverb. Although well acquainted with the Christian doctrine of brotherly love, any exhibition of it between a man and a woman he, in all probability, regarded as a moral impossibility, and a bad example for his pretty young wife to witness. The situation was embarrassing, to say the least of it, and pregnant with "oddness," they were unable to conceal. Excellent Allen, too, full of generous sentiments and allowing wide latitude to the poet, we can imagine him shrugging his shoulders when in solemn conclave they discussed the "odd friendship" of their guests. Given these opposing elements—what could Miss Patty expect but a strangeness of behaviour, a struggle to be polite in the face of a disposition to be the reverse, which roused her anger to vindictive lengths? For, despite her denials, it is generally believed she was guilty of the revenge imputed to her; a woman, doubted, slighted or scorned, so rarely forgives!

(*To be continued.*)

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STRAY CHILDREN IN FICTION.

THERE has been no more marked feature in the development of the literature of the age than the numbers of books written about children for children. Tommy Merton and Harry Sandford; Mrs. Sherwood's Idiot Boy; the Fairchild Family, their sins and punishments; Rosamond, of purple-jar celebrity; Frank and Lazy Lawrence, have passed away, and have been succeeded by a new generation, countless as the sands of the sea-shore.

Among these children of a later age we have all got our friends and favourites, familiar and dear to us as the children of our own households. We know them intimately, enjoy their humours and caprices, suffer in their sorrows, rejoice in their happiness, and find it hard to be comforted for their loss. Have we not laughed and wept over Humphrey and Miles, over Jackanapes and Rupert? is not Alice immortal in that Wonderland she has made so real to us?

In thinking over our friends in fiction, the sound of these child voices, their peals of laughter, and their unavailing, passionate tears come home to us with as keen a sense of reality as the deeper but not more poignant emotions of their elders.

But these are not the children, nor is this literature the fiction alluded to in the title of this article. It is of those other

> "limber elves,
> Singing, dancing to themselves,"

through the pages of novels in no wise devoted to their doings and sayings, of whom I would speak—children who serve no dramatic end, whose existence, or cessation from existence (as in the case of little Nell and Paul Dombey), fulfils no pathetic purpose, but who dance and sing to themselves with the frank egotism of childhood, unconscious of the plots weaving around them, indifferent to the struggles, loves and hates of the men and women, at whose side they disport themselves.

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Such a child is Henry Ashton, the young brother of the Bride of Lammermoor. He flits in and out of the pages of that great tragedy, with true childlike indifference to every matter of graver import than the number of tynes on the branches of the deer killed by Lord Bittlebrains' hounds, or his new pony brought from the Mull of Galloway, or the ring-walk being laid out by Norman the keeper. Only once does a note of the deep chord of tragedy, inevitable and heavy with fate, strike on his ear. When he first sees the Master of Ravenswood, his usual self-assurance leaves him; he is timid and subdued, as if conscious of an impending doom, and his awe-struck allusions to Sir Malise Ravenswood and the family motto "I bide my time," accentuate the gloom of the situation. But in the fresh air of the woods his spirits return. Sir Malise and his vengeance are forgotten. Henry chases hares, investigates the habits of badgers, makes embarrassing and audible asides about old Alice, and finally departs to superintend the making of the ring-walk, leaving the lovers to work out their own sad destiny. When, a few pages further on, a dead raven, shot by an arrow from Henry's cross-bow, falls at the Master's feet, and Lucy's dress is stained with some spots of blood, what in Wagner phraseology would be termed the "Bride-Motif" is distinctly heard, ominous and full of tragic meaning; but Henry is far too intent on impressing on them the length of the shot and the excellence of his aim, to care for omens or portents. In the same spirit of boundless, boyish self-complacency, he thrusts himself upon his sister, on the ill-fated day when the wedding deeds with Buckland are to be signed, with a detailed account of his own finery, his scarlet coat and laced hat, interspersed with vague generalities on the conduct of brides, and cheerful prognostications for Lucy's future. But on the marriage morning, when she mounts the pillion behind him, the touch of her cold hand on his, leaves an impression on him that he never forgets.

Somewhere in 'Vanity Fair,' in a page of moralising on the final act in the drama of life, and the comparative indifference of the spectators, occur these lines, "We may be harsh and stern with Judah and Simeon, our love and pity gush out for Benjamin, the little one." In this spirit Thackeray treats the children, whom we have learnt to know and love in his pages. How his heart yearns over little Rawdon Crawley, motherless, in the saddest sense of the word! We can forgive Becky everything more readily than her treatment of the little boy who worshipped

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her; to whom her rare visits were as the apparition of a being from a superior world; to whom her room, with its ornaments, mirrors, and dresses, was the entrance to a fairyland. On Molly, the devoted housemaid, he lavished his caresses; his feelings to his father were a mixture of *camaraderie* and hero-worship; but his mother was the object of his idolatry. Every morning he sat beside his father, watching him shave, with the unfailing interest of a child, that makes their "do it again" more terrible in its importunity than it is flattering in its appreciation. It was only on rare occasions that he was with his mother, when he drove with her in the Park, gazing at her from the opposite seat in silent, reverential admiration; or when she looked in upon him for a minute in his nursery in the upper regions. Almost our first introduction to Rawdon junior is in this up-stairs room, where he and his father play together very quietly, so as not to awake his mother.

"The room was a low room, and once, when the child was not five years old, his father, who was tossing him wildly up in his arms, hit the poor little chap's skull so violently against the ceiling, that he almost dropped the child, so terrified was he at the disaster. Rawdon minor had made up his face for a tremendous howl—the severity of the blow indeed authorized that indulgence; but just as he was going to begin, the father interposed—

"'For God's sake, Rawdy, don't wake mamma!' he cried. And the child, looking in a very hard and piteous way at his father, bit his lips, clenched his hands, and didn't cry a bit."

How does Becky repay this devotion?

"One day, when he was standing at the landing-place, having crept down from the upper regions, attracted by the sound of his mother's voice, who was singing to Lord Steyne, the drawing-room door opening wide discovered the little spy, who but a moment before had been rapt in delight, and listening to the music.

"His mother came out and struck him violently a couple of boxes on the ear. He heard a laugh from the Marquis in the inner room (who was amused by this free and heartless exhibition of Becky's temper), and fled down below to his friends of the kitchen, bursting in an agony of grief.

"'It is not because it hurts me,' little Rawdon gasped out, 'only—only——' sobs and tears wound up the sentence in a storm. It was the little boy's heart that was bleeding. 'Why

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mayn't I hear her singing? Why don't she ever sing to me—as she does to that bald-headed man with the large teeth?'"

No wonder that that blow did more than make his ears tingle. It was the death-blow to the loving little fellow's feelings to his mother, and it makes our blood boil now to read of it. We like to think of him shortly after, wrapped up by the faithful Briggs in shawl and comforter, and seated beside his father on the box of the carriage driving to Queen's Crawley. Here he is promoted from dinner in the kitchen to the dining-room; he takes part in prayers for the first time in his life, and he attaches himself to his kind aunt, Lady Jane, lavishing on her the love that Becky had rejected. From that time we are happier about him. When he goes to school, his frank, open, generous nature wins him many friends; and it is for the father deprived of his beloved little companion that our pity is awakened. When poor old Rawdon goes to Coventry Island, he writes regularly to his boy, and tries in his foolish, blundering fashion to repay Lady Jane's goodness to the child, with gifts of guava jelly, cayenne pepper, and hot pickles. If no one else cared about the poor exile, at least little Rawdon got satisfaction from reading accounts of "His Excellency" in the papers his father sent home.

In spite of the wealth of affection lavished on him by his mother, Georgy Osborne is a much less lovable child than Rawdon; indeed, we could find it in our heart to dislike and despise him, had not a larger heart and head willed it otherwise. The contempt Thackeray feels for George's handsome, weak father descends in a measure to the son; but he relents to the "Benjamin" in him, and in spite of his egotism, vanity, and domineering ways, George junior will grow up a better and a stronger man than his father, a man, in fact, very like Pendennis. He may even develop the literary talents of our friend Pen, to judge by the sonorous periods, and apt historical illustrations of his theme on Selfishness. A fine imaginative strain, too, is not lacking, as shown in the accounts he gives his fond and credulous mother of his encounter with the Baker's lad (described as a giant), and other feats of valour performed in single combat against his fellow-pupils at the Rev. Mr. Binny's.

In most little boys there is something suggestive of a Newfoundland puppy, their love of motion for motion's sake, their little short unmeaning runs and gambols, and affectionate, uncouth caresses; but Master Georgy's antics are rather those of a per-

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forming dog. His manhood asserts itself, however, in the way he lords it over both his grandfathers, and in his airs of superiority with his gentle, adoring mother. But what could be expected of a little boy who has "carriage friends" calling on him at Mr. Veal's classical establishment? Still the boy has a saving sense of humour, and the snubs from circumstances which he cannot fail to get in 'Vanity Fair,' will in time reduce his swagger and braggadocio; besides, he is really fond of his mother, and devoted to Dobbin. We never like him so well as when he bursts into tears in the public streets of Pumpernickel (there is a savour of paradox about the expression!), when his kind old friend drives away, with a pain at his heart greater than George will ever be capable of feeling.

In the concluding chapter in 'Barry Lyndon' two consecutive pages are headed "The soft place in my heart," and "I lose my last hope in life." They are an account of the death of poor little Bryan. His father had given him on his tenth birthday a beautiful but very high-spirited horse, threatening at the same time to flog him if he ever mounted it without his permission. The child, brought up with no idea of obedience or discipline, started early one morning to ride him, in spite of his father's threat. What followed must be told in Thackeray's own words:

"I took a great horsewhip and galloped off after him in a rage, swearing I would keep my promise. But, heaven forgive me! I little thought of it, when at three miles from home I met a sad procession coming towards me; peasants mourning and howling as our Irish do, the black horse led by the hand, and, on a door that some of the folks carried, my poor dear, dear little boy. There he lay in his little boots and spurs, and his little coat of scarlet and gold. His dear face was quite white, and he smiled as he held a hand out to me, and said, painfully, 'You won't whip me, will you, papa?' I could only burst out into tears in reply. I have seen many and many a man dying, and there's a look about the eyes which you cannot mistake. There was a little drummer-boy I was fond of, who was hit down before my company at Kühnersdorf; when I ran up to give him some water, he looked exactly like my dear Bryan then did—there's no mistaking that awful look of the eyes. We carried him home, and scoured the country round for doctors to come and look at his hurt.

"But what does the doctor avail in a contest with the grim invincible enemy? Such as came could only confirm our despair

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by their account of the poor child's case. He had mounted his horse gallantly, sat him bravely all the time the animal plunged and kicked, and, having overcome his first spite, ran him at a hedge by the road-side. But there were loose stones at the top, and the horse's foot caught among them, and he and his brave little rider rolled over together at the other side. The people said they saw the noble little boy spring up after his fall, and run to catch the horse; which had broken away from him, kicking him on the back, as it would seem, as they lay on the ground. Poor Bryan ran a few yards, and then dropped down as if shot. A pallor came over his face, and they thought he was dead. But they poured whisky down his mouth, and the poor child revived. Still he could not move; his spine was injured; the lower half of him was dead when they laid him in bed at home. The rest did not last long, God help me! He remained yet for two days with us; and a sad comfort it was to think that he was in no pain.

"During this time the dear angel's temper seemed quite to change; he asked his mother and me pardon for any act of disobedience he had been guilty of towards us; he said often he should like to see his brother Bullingdon. 'Bully was better than you, papa,' he said; 'he used not to swear so, and he told and taught me many good things, while you were away.' And taking a hand of his mother and mine in each of his little clammy ones, he begged us not to quarrel so, but love each other, so that we might meet again in heaven, where Bully told him quarrelsome people never went."

Sad as little Bryan's death is, his life with such a father must have been infinitely sadder.

Dickens' name at once calls up some inimitable pictures of child-life. We could almost wish that David Copperfield had never grown up, so delightful is his childhood. "Wot larx" we have had with Pip and Joe Gargery, and how we have suffered with poor little Oliver Twist! but none of these are "stray children." A few such there are, like the delightful infant phenomenon twirling and pirouetting across the scenes of 'Nicholas Nickleby,' but, as Mr. Crummles truly said, "She must be seen, sir,—seen—to be ever so faintly appreciated." And who but Dickens can show her to us, or her contemporaries the little Kenwigs, or the fat boy, or Tommy Bardell? When the infant phenomenon goes with Miss Snevellicci to call on the Borums, Master Augustus Borum is discovered pinching her to find out whether she was

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real. Tested by this final appeal to flesh and blood, perhaps none of Dickens' children are real, but they are none the less delightful, entertaining, and unique.

No more perfect account of child-life has ever been drawn, than the story of Maggie and Tom Tulliver's early days at the 'Mill on the Floss;' or of little golden-haired Eppie, her naughtiness and her repentance in the coal-hole; but with them, as with Pauline in 'Villette,' and Molly in 'Wives and Daughters,' "the child is father of the man." We feel about them as we do about our own contemporaries; we have been young with them, and we have grown up together. They were the companions of our childhood, they are the friends of our riper years.

Some delightful "stray children" there are, bound between the yellow-backed boards of 'Ravenshoe,' if indeed the word "bound" can be applied to beings who are a law unto themselves, and who refuse to be shackled by the most ordinary conventions of a nineteenth-century civilization. No one who has read that book can have forgotten Lord Charles Herries' children, Flora, Gus, and Archie; and if any one has not read it, well, life has still a pleasure in store for him. There is an originality about the deeds and misdeeds of these children, which leads us to *tout pardonner*, though it is more difficult with our limited imagination to *tout comprendre*. Why should they have chosen a church-pew during the double-wedding ceremony as the scene of their most signal defiance of discipline and order? We are not surprised when Archie takes a header from his hassock among the free-seats, little boys being apt illustrations of the law of gravity; and Flora's strong dramatic sense has prepared us for an outburst from her, in any character but *in propriâ personâ*; but our nerves are not strung up to bear Gus's behaviour without astonishment. He has already struck dismay into the heart of his attendant by the display of a large tin trumpet; but this unsuspicious man had been thrown off his guard by a reassuring whisper from Flora, to the effect that he would probably not blow it till the organ began. Her sisterly faith, however, was doomed to receive a rude shock. Hear what follows.

"He had disappeared. And the pew door had never opened, and I was utterly unconscious. Gus had crawled upon all-fours under the seat of the pew, until he was opposite the calves of his sister's legs, against which calves, *horresco referens!* he put his trumpet, and blew a long, shrill blast. Flora behaved very well and courageously. She only gave one long, wild shriek, as

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from a lunatic in a padded cell at Bedlam, and then hurling her prayer-book at him, she turned round and kicked him in the face."

Tennyson's 'Spinster,' among other less obvious causes for self-complacency, congratulates herself on never having been troubled with children—

"A haxin' ma hawkard questions, an' saäying ondecent things."

Poor Joan, in Miss Broughton's novel, had to dispense with this extenuating circumstance of the unmarried state. Even Montacute, in other respects a nice, studious little boy, worries her on a hot Sunday's walk to church with perplexing questions about the Equator, and pries with unnecessary curiosity into the family history of the Georges. His brother and sister do not confine their inquiries to subjects historical and geographical. When Rupert is not preparing booby-traps for Faustine, or reciting the ignoble lay of Mr. Lobsky (mercifully he has only learnt one verse from his friend James, the footman) he is enlarging his knowledge of human nature by questions such as, "Do husbands and wives always quarrel?" "I wonder if you will ever have a husband?" "Is Papa a Yahoo?" and so *da capo*. These children tamper, too, with the Unseen, and draw anything but exhilarating or dignified conclusions as to Joan's and their own future, from the mystic numbers of cherry-stones. Miss Broughton's children are always amusing and natural, but they win our laughter rather than our love. One exception there is, Franky in 'Doctor Cupid.' His sister Lily is merely a younger sister of Faustine Smith Deloraine; but Franky is different, a dear, natural, generous little boy, whose sacrifice to the dramatic exigencies of the story we deplore.

A strange, precocious, unlovable specimen of childhood comes to us across the Atlantic, in the person of Randolph C. Miller, the brother of the fascinating and enigmatic Daisy. There is nothing enigmatic about Randolph. His strictures on men and things are characterized by audacious frankness. When he asserts that his father is "in a better place than Europe," our ignorance of Schencetady, the abode of Ezra B. Miller, makes it impossible for us to take up his challenge. But it is somewhat satisfactory to learn that "this old Europe" (the words are Randolph's own) and its climate, are having destructive effects on his teeth. We could almost wish that some more vital organ had been attacked; and we are more than usually resigned to

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the misfortunes of others, when he announces that he is suffering from dyspepsia, and that his symptoms are worse than those of his mother, or of Ezra B., notwithstanding that the latter is able to enjoy the ministrations of Dr. Davis of Schencetady. We hope that Randolph may speedily return to the medical care of this excellent man, by the *City of Richmond*, the steamer that brought him across the Atlantic, and the one thing in "this old Europe" that has met with his approbation; unless, indeed, he finds a shorter and swifter passage out of this old world.

In Miss Thackeray's novels there is a constant sound of children's voices, a patter of children's feet; but I can at this moment only remember one child whom we identify, Catherine's little French step-son Toto, in 'The Village on the Cliff.'

The potentate of the nursery, lord of his own dominions, and ruler of the persons of his family at such times as he deigns to appear among them, has been so admirably described by Mr. James Payn in his account of "the Great Baba" in 'Under one Roof,' that I cannot refrain from quoting part of the paragraph that ushers us in to his babyship's august presence.

"That he considered himself by very far the most important personage on this terrestrial planet is certain (and no wonder), and we are also inclined to believe that (in spite of appearances) he also deemed himself the first even in chronological order. It was his imperial humour to conceive himself the sole repository of information, and he imparted it in infinitesimal quantities to the world at large, and with the air of a teacher. When a horse passed him, he would observe to his attendants 'Gee-Gee,' with a wave of his small hand, as though to impress it upon their attention. 'I have named that quadruped, you observe' (he seemed to say), 'and mind you don't forget it.' He was equally at home with Science as with Nature, and, on once meeting with a steam-roller in London, remarked, 'Puff, puff,' in a precisely similar manner."

Throughout the three volumes of 'Under one Roof,' we always hail the Great Baba's remarks with a delight that would be gratifying even to his adoring family. These remarks have no literary merit; the Great Baba is regardless of the beggarly elements of grammar and orthography; they often belong to the class of personalities, and are conceived in a spirit of frank directness; yet none the less do we sympathize with the appreciative emotion shown by his relations and friends on hearing them. At one juncture the tangled skein of the story

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rests for a moment in the Great Baba's fat, podgy, little hands. He handles the meshes with the firmness and decision of a single-minded nature, and only at the bribe of macaroons does he relinquish his hold on the thread of destiny.

America could afford to send us Randolph C. Miller when she kept on her own side of the Atlantic, Pearl, the fascinating, elfish child, who dances alongside of her sorrow-stricken mother through the pages of 'The Scarlet Letter.' Is she child, or is she sprite, this vivid, glowing little creature, of fantastic mood, and wayward, fitful tenderness; of unaccountable caprices, and strange, childlike impulses; now bowing and becking to her own image in the pool, or wreathing her hair with sea-weed or wild flowers, and next moment eluding her mother's caresses, and wounding her deepest feelings with an almost impish malignancy? She is a creature by herself, made up "of spirit, fire, and dew," yet strongly earthly and human in her childish loves and hates, and gusty fits of passion. She hovers on the borderland of the Real and the Unreal, like those two elusive little boys, "the children in black" (in one of Thackeray's 'Roundabout Papers'), who baffle all our efforts to grasp their identity, and solve the sad mystery of their young lives. Very real they are to us, those two little men, beautifully dressed as we first saw them, with their handsome, aristocratic-looking mother; squalid and neglected when we meet one of them a fortnight later in Venice; shabby and miserable in charge of a fierce-looking father when we part with them a week after at a side station on the Semmerin Pass. Who were they? What had happened to them in the short interval? Were they real or only "Dream Children"? like those visionary little beings, the creatures of Charles Lamb's tender fantasy, who claim so large a place in our human sympathies, though we know them to belong to the land of shadows and mists, the dim visionary world of the Might-have-been.

And so, too, with that other dream-child, "die kleine todte Veronika," of Heine's 'Reisebilder.' We long to know more of her, but when we put out our hand to take her little soft one, we clasp air. She is an "ombre vane fuor che nell' aspetto." She is nothing but an idea and a memory, this little Veronika with the still eyes, whose name recurs at intervals throughout the book, touching our heart and striking our imagination. We hear her spoken of by "die schöne Johanna," and see her lying in her tiny coffin, with the look of peace on her white smiling face, but we never know more of her as a little living child, and yet the

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thought of her remains with us woven into our memory by the magic of Heine's words haunting us like a recurring note of music. Veronika—"true image" of those other stray children who can never be more than a memory to us. We would fain know more about them, these small beings, with whom we have had so fleeting a friendship. But it may not be. We have looked into their faces, and have listened to their confidences for a few minutes, and they have passed out of our lives for ever, into the unfinished world of romance, where we cannot follow.

E. C. SELLAR.

THIS LIFE.

I WOULD not lose the joy of having dwelt
Upon this earth—the wondrous gift of mind—
The power of thinking, sharing with mankind
Its hopes and fears, which have been freely dealt
To all. To know, to suffer, to have felt,
To love, is life—whate'er may lie behind,
We struggle onward, worn, and faint, and blind.
But should the darkness into sunrise melt,
And earth's dear insufficiency recoil
Into the broader, deeper hope which gleamed,
Shall we not triumph that throughout the toil
And warfare of our present life, we deemed
That evil was but passing, faith a foil
To knowledge, so transcending all we dreamed?

D. M. BRUCE.

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BEGUN IN JEST.

BY MRS. NEWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "HER WILL AND HER WAY," "WITH COSTS," "THE LAST OF THE HADDONS," &c.

CHAPTER XX.

MR. LEICESTER'S ADVICE.

FOR the next few days Mabel saw no one but the children. She knew there were people staying in the house, and supposed she received no invitation simply because her services were not required, and because Aubyn was not there. She was tormented with anxiety, her heart yearning towards Gerard in his misery, although she dared not wish this less at the moment, saying to herself that the stain upon his honour could only be burnt out that way. Afterwards he would go back to Dorrie, clothed, and in his right mind. Only to herself would he never again be the Gerard she had once believed in.

Meanwhile Dorothy had evidently no misgivings. Her letters showed not the slightest evidence of anxiety or depression. On the contrary, Mabel had noticed of late a light-heartedness and content, amounting to sportiveness of tone, to which she was quite unaccustomed in Dorothy. She always sent her love to Gerard, and generally some little playful message, showing that she was quite free from anxiety about him.

"She takes it for granted that all is, of course, well with him, while he is here! She trusts me to give her love to him; how could she imagine I should give him my own?" bitterly thought Mabel. "If I could but go back to her with a clear conscience! If I had but in the outset overcome the stupid pride which prevented my returning home, and openly acknowledged, as I ought to have done, that I found myself unequal to the work I had undertaken, all this might have been prevented. Had I only kept more aloof from him; had I relied less on my own strength—and his! If only he had been strong! Now! how

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could I meet them at home, knowing what I do! No; I could not—not yet. Even this is more endurable!" catching up Pinnock, and impatiently demanding a list of the principal rivers of Europe.

Just then Aubyn, looking the embodiment of fresh air and sunshine, came into the school-room to relieve her of Algy, and, on behalf of his sister, asked Mabel to join the dinner party that evening. She declined the invitation to dinner, but felt she could not well refuse to go to the drawing-room without entering into some sort of explanation, and thereby drawing attention to herself; which, with one so keen-sighted as he, she a little shrunk from doing. Were she to plead headache again, he would, in his kindly desire to make things more cheerful for her, be devising all sorts of plans to give her change and amusement; and this in her present frame of mind was what she especially desired to avoid. One thing he said made the going down that day easier for her. He mentioned by chance, as it seemed, that Gerard had been in town the last day or two, and had not yet returned.

"He has gone back to Dorrie!" thought Mabel, with a sigh of relief. It was something to know he was able to do that!

Mr. Leicester had not expected to see Mabel, supposing it to be very unlikely the governess would be present, and endeavoured to persuade himself that he did not even desire that she should be. Since it would not be possible to get rid of the obstacles in the way, certain feelings must not be indulged in, he told himself, and it was therefore better he should not meet her. His self-communings notwithstanding, he was conscious that there was no other attraction for him there. He certainly had not gone to Beechwoods for the pleasure of spending an evening with its owner. He had the old rector's doubt as to Aubyn being "safe," and this not only on doctrinal matters, but on others which Mr. Leicester considered did not come within a clergyman's province.

Again, he was a little on his dignity at finding no other gentleman was there to meet him than Mr. Hurst, a young man fresh from Oxford, whom Mr. Leicester loftily ignored as a tyro. Mr. Hurst accepted the other's loftiness with easy good humour, contenting himself, when the ladies left the table, with throwing in an occasional word when challenged by Aubyn, and, meantime, finding amusement for himself in taking mental photographs

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of Mr. Leicester, as he posed on his favourite subjects. Aubyn's attention had been drawn to him as a clever, not to say brilliant, young fellow likely to make some mark in the world; already taking a great deal of interest in the questions of the day, and showing an inclination to use his energies for the benefit not only of the large landed estate he had lately succeeded to, but of those employed upon it.

"What are you going to do with regard to the new man at the Abbey?" Mr. Leicester enquired of his host. "Not a very desirable acquisition to the neighbourhood, I fear, but I suppose it will be necessary to take some notice of him—after awhile."

"Mr. Joyce? My sister and I drove over to the Abbey, yesterday"—it was not necessary to explain how unwilling she had been to go—"and I had a long talk with him."

"Oh—oh, indeed!"

"And," went on Aubyn, ignoring, perhaps a little amused at, the other's evident disapproval, "I think we shall get on extremely well together. Just the man one likes to see rise in life. Strong, energetic, intelligent, and independent, as well as unassuming. A keen sense of the responsibilities of wealth, too. We shall have to do all we know to keep abreast of him in the management of the land and improving the condition of the people. He gave me plenty to think of on my way home, I assure you."

"You had not gone much into the question previously, I expect," said Mr. Leicester, with the air of not only having gone into it himself, but settled it.

"I thought I had. I have striven my best since coming into this property; but there is always something to be learned from such men as Mr. Joyce, who has earned his experience by hard work. You ought to know him, Hurst."

"Certainly I ought. There is a Mrs. Joyce, is there not?"

"Yes; a nice motherly woman, who has evidently helped her husband all through. My sister-in-law thought she talked too much of her sons at Eton, and another making his way at Cambridge; but that sort of pride seems excusable enough, in a mother."

Hurst nodded. "We will go over in a body, to-morrow."

"Eton and Cambridge," said Mr. Leicester, superciliously.

"Yes; he is quite alive to the value of what is to be got there; and the best of it is, he does not stop short at his own

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belongings—he is desirous of helping others, and especially the working classes."

"Not, I hope, by rendering them more dissatisfied than they are," put in Mr. Leicester. "Mr. Joyce will, I trust, see what is really best for the working classes. The position is becoming a little difficult as it is, with the 'march of intellect' I heard one of my gardeners talking about the other day."

"Mr. Joyce is too keen-sighted for that. He is only desirous of helping them to help themselves," said Aubyn.

"And perhaps he does not object to their having a proper reverence for their betters," said Hurst, with a side glance at Mr. Leicester.

"I am quite sure he does not," said Aubyn. "You should have seen his chest heave, and the colour rise to his strong face, as he brought down his fist upon the table, with a loud, 'God bless him!' when we touched upon the engine-driver's deed of heroism the other day. Quite stirred one's blood to see a man capable of going out of himself in that way, after the hard experience of a long uphill fight.

Mr. Leicester coughed dubiously; and, conscious of having spoken a little from malice prepense, Aubyn went on: "Nor is he the less inclined to respect the inheritors of ancient names. I am not sure that he does not over-estimate the advantages and opportunities such men have."

"Well, we must endeavour to show him what use we can make of our opportunities," largely said Mr. Leicester, who had no misgivings as to his own power to do so. "On the whole, I think Mr. Joyce ought to be countenanced."

Aubyn smiled at the mental picture that rose before him of Mr. Joyce being countenanced by Mr. Leicester. "If Mr. Joyce puts Mr. Leicester through such an examination as he put me through, it won't be Mr. Joyce that will come off second best."

"Yes, the people have certainly a right to expect a great deal from men of ancient name," said Mr. Leicester, his estimation of their rights extending so far; complacently going on to dilate upon the advantages of ancient descent, and the natural right of those possessing it to be rulers.

Mr. Hurst put on a duly impressed, not to say reverential air, which went far to modify Mr. Leicester's first opinion of him. But Aubyn, strongly objecting to Mr. Leicester's views, and almost as much to his pompous way of enunciating them, found

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it somewhat difficult to treat him with the courtesy due to a guest. "If I don't keep myself better in hand I shall have to walk all the way up to London after he is gone," thought Aubyn with a grim smile.

When Mr. Leicester at length brought his oration to a close, and signified his readiness to join the ladies, Aubyn sprang up with a sigh of relief.

All but Mrs. Hurst—who, it was understood, liked a little "quiet reflection" after dinner, and was gravely nodding her befeathered head in a corner of a couch—were gathered about the piano, discussing the merits of a new song her daughter had been singing, when Mabel entered. She slipped into the inner room, she imagined, unperceived, and seated herself near a table upon which were some photographic views, which she might appear to be occupied in examining. As soon as Aubyn caught sight of her he went to her side, and took up one of the views she was looking over to make an opportunity of exchanging a few words with her.

"I miss Harcourt terribly," he began, with the thought that Gerard would have been able to keep his temper even with Mr. Leicester.

"Yes, I suppose so," she murmured, the colour rushing to her cheeks as she nervously asked herself why he was beginning about Gerard.

"He has gone to—— You know why he wants to see Dorothy just now—I daresay she has given you a hint as to the state of things?" smilingly.

"No; but I can guess. Of course I knew it was coming," with a not very successful attempt to return his smile.

He looked a little puzzled, but forbore to give utterance to the words that rose to his lips. After a few moments' silence, he said, looking more gravely at her white, downcast face, and asking himself what had changed her so much within the last few days—

"Why not run up to town and spend a few hours with your sister? She is, of course, very desirous to see you, and cannot well visit here until she can come as your sister should. If you do not care to remain longer in town, you might easily go and return in the day. There is the morning express, and the five o'clock down, which would give you a few hours with her.

For a moment or two she shrank painfully from the thought. How could she meet Dorothy? But she presently reflected that

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she must pass through the ordeal sooner or later, and, in the first short hurried interview they would be too much taken up with generalities to enter deeply even upon the one theme that would be so embarrassing to her. "Moreover, if taken by surprise, Dorothy would be less likely to notice any confusion or self-consciousness on my side," thought Mabel.

"I will go," she murmured, more to herself than to him.

"To-morrow?"

"I could not—I—I mean the little Leicesters are coming, and—— The day after, perhaps," she replied, fain to catch at the excuse for a little longer delay, so that she might have more time to prepare herself for the ordeal. And please do not say anything about it if you see her meantime. I should like to—surprise her."

"I will mention it to no one. By the way," he presently added, "you employ a young girl from the village to work for you occasionally, do you not?"

"Lucy May?"

"Yes, that is the name. What do you think of her—what is she like?"

"She is sweet-tempered, and——" hesitating a little as to what next she should say.

"Sweet temper is of great importance to us—to begin with."

"Us?"

"The Co. is Bloggs. He has fallen fathoms deep in love with your pretty Lucy, and it is on his account that I am interested. He might not do for many, but I hope he has some chance with her, for I honestly believe he will come out well—perhaps even grandly—under the right woman's influence. He is very desirous to be allowed to remain here, employed about the grounds. But a man with the material in him which I give him credit for, ought to be in the thick of the fight, and would be far more useful to me in London. With a sensible wife, he would be invaluable to me."

"Sensible!" repeated Mabel a little doubtfully. "I said she is sweet-tempered, and—" after another moment's hesitation, "I think I ought to say good; but——"

"I see. But being good and sweet-tempered is worth a great deal in these days. Of course, if one could also have good sense——"

"I am not sure that she has not," put in Mabel. "I shall take more interest in her now, and will certainly do my best for

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Bloggs, after what you have said. Only," with a glance towards his arm, "isn't he rather——"

"He isn't rather anything," rising, and turning away with a nod and a smile.

Miss Hurst had finished her song, and, as the group re-arranged itself, he had to join it and play the host. Miss Norton wanted his advice about her schools—she always wanted a great deal of advice from him—and Mrs. Brandreth was making herself charming to Mr. Leicester. He was not talking with his usual *aplomb*, his eyes straying now and again furtively towards the governess.

Another had been as quick to take note of her presence. Mr. Hurst was making his way to her side, when his mother, awake and on the alert now, reminded him in a somewhat raised voice that he ought to turn over the music for his sister. He hesitated, but Miss Hurst, who quite understood her mother's motive, and was ready to do her part, looked over her shoulder with the words, "Yes, please, Edward." He could make no open objection, and slowly went towards the piano. Moreover, his whispered word to her, "Ask Miss Leith to sing, Mary," was put off with a smiling, "Presently," and, meantime, he could only accept the situation with as good a grace as might be.

To avoid attracting attention to herself by keeping entirely aloof, Mabel presently passed from the inner to the larger room, and, crossing to one of the windows, stood looking out. Mr. Leicester's eyes had followed her every movement. It was the first time he had seen her in a room, and he was not a little surprised by her bearing. She seemed so much more subdued than he had expected to see her—subdued, but at the same time so perfectly self-possessed and free from self-consciousness. To him she was more attractive than even when he had first seen her. The wistful look in the blue-grey eyes, the delicate pallor of her face, the soft languor of her movements, were additional, and quite unexpected, charms in his sight. She said very little—only a word or two in reply to one occasionally addressed to her, and seemed in no way interested in the topics touched upon by the others. But for one slip in her behaviour, she would have passed with honours in Mr. Leicester's estimation. Some allusion had been made by Mrs. Hurst, talking to Mrs. Brandreth and Mr. Leicester, near where Mabel was sitting, to a deed of daring and self-sacrifice just then attracting a great deal of attention, for which the hero was to receive the cross of

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honour. Mrs. Brandreth, as little given to hero-worship as was Mr. Leicester himself, slightly raised her shoulders, and gave it as her opinion that such deeds were not unfrequently done with some anticipation of the glory to come.

Mr. Leicester smiled assent, and not averse from giving Aubyn a rap on the knuckles on the score of his engine-driver, quoted one of the German philosophers on the subject of posturing before the world.

Mabel advanced a step, and, standing with her hands lightly locked behind her, and head erect, quite forgetting that she was not expected to offer an opinion, suddenly put in—

"I don't agree with that at all!"

There was silence, three pairs of eyes turned coldly upon her.

"May I venture to inquire with what it is you do not agree, Miss Leith?" said Mrs. Brandreth.

"Why, with Mr. Leicester's philosopher," hotly. "He might object to posturing before the world; but it was a mistake to commit himself by saying that heroes posture, I think."

Mrs. Hurst opened her eyes and exchanged a glance with Mrs. Brandreth. Aubyn paused a moment in his conversation with Miss Norton to listen, then quietly went on again. Mabel was quite able to defend herself with Mr. Leicester. That gentleman was, for the moment, too much astonished to make any reply, and when he had in some measure recovered his equanimity, and was preparing to demonstrate where she was wrong, Mabel had turned away, leaving them to settle the matter as they pleased. The hot flush had died out of her cheeks, as, half-vexed, half-amused, she took herself to task for her little ebullition. "Just like me!" she was thinking. "What did it matter? Why couldn't I leave them to their posturing?" She met Aubyn's eyes bent smilingly upon her, and gave him a little smile in return. But he noticed that the smile faded all too quickly out of her face again.

Just before taking leave, Mr. Leicester contrived to join Mabel for a few moments in order to administer the slight rebuke which he considered it necessary she should receive.

"Are you not sometimes a little too impulsive in your judgments, Miss Leith?"

"Oh, yes—often," was her careless reply.

She did not even take the trouble to add that she did not consider her judgment was at fault upon the point to which he was referring.

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"And would it not be wiser to avoid placing yourself in a position which obliges you to afterwards admit so much?"

A half-smile gathered in her eyes again, as she glanced up at him for a moment. "Should she? No; it was not worth the trouble. What did it matter?" she thought, giving him a little weary bend of the head, which might mean anything he chose, for reply.

"Still," he went on, graciously, "the admission must be accepted as a plea for a lenient sentence, and therefore"—with a ponderous attempt at pleasantry—"I think I shall not inflict a very heavy punishment; only to take a little advice occasionally—may I say from me?"

"You? I am afraid you are too severe a judge, Mr. Leicester," she replied.

But her little shaft missed its aim. She felt that she might almost have said that to be sentenced to have him for her judge was too severe a punishment.

"Not at all—not at all! You would not find me so"—with amiable condescension, as he reluctantly bowed his good night, and turned away to take leave of his host and hostess.

Her eyes had an amused expression as they followed him for a moment. Mr. Leicester for an adviser! But she was presently drooping in spirit again, the troubled look returning to her eyes, and her whole bearing becoming weary and dejected.

"I must say a word of warning to Harcourt," thought Aubyn, watching her now and again with some anxiety. "He has been going too far with his assumed incredulity about what she most believes in, and she is beginning to take it seriously."

He lost no time, availing himself of the first opportunity that offered when they were alone together.

"My dear Harcourt, cannot you see that you are going too far with Mabel. It is all very well for you—the method you adopt for confirming your own belief in her seems to serve your purpose. I can see how much good it is doing you, to find that nothing you can say in the slightest degree weakens her faith; but—has it never occurred to you that you may destroy her faith in yourself?"

"She has none to be destroyed"—with a hard smile.

Aubyn turned his eyes with a look of keen enquiry towards the other. Had it indeed come to that? Had he gone so far as to endanger her happiness as well as his own? But he knew the other too well to venture any farther. Gerard Harcourt was

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not the man to be helped by well-intentioned speeches. The utmost Aubyn had hoped for was to set him thinking, and that he seemed to have succeeded in doing, although Harcourt was evidently not inclined to communicate his thoughts. Already he had himself well under control, the expression of his face being in marked contrast with Aubyn's, so full of interest and anxiety. To outward seeming, Gerard had at that moment no thought for anything but the business of carefully rolling a cigarette. Laying his hand upon the other's shoulder, with a quiet "good night, old man," which was genially echoed by Gerard, Aubyn left him to his reflections. Quietly and carefully going on with what he was doing, as though everything in life depended upon the perfection of that cigarette, Gerard at length had it to his mind, methodically ranged it with others in the case, then rose from his seat and stood looking out into the night, with set grey ace, and eyes that seemed to defy fate.

"To-morrow," he murmured; "to-morrow!"

The next morning came the little Leicesters with their governess, and desirous to receive the news which she expected Miss Temple would have to tell as it ought to be received, Mabel strove to forget her own troubles, and to appear not lacking in sympathy. Decking her face with smiles, and putting on a general air of gaiety, she did, in the outset, contrive to prevent the other seeing the truth.

"Something has happened to you," she smilingly began, feeling, in fact, not a little cheered to see the change for the better that had taken place in the other since they last met, as she entered with her pupils and warmly returned Mabel's greeting.

Miss Temple was indeed looking ten years younger than she had done at their first meeting.

"I think you must have brought me good news," went on Mabel, as soon as the children's attention had become concentrated on each other, and the two governesses could be as confidential as they pleased unobserved. "It is written all over you—a kind of happy don't-careishness that is quite refreshing to look at! The very scarf round your neck has been tied with a disregard of propriety that is quite delightful; and, with all due respect, I can't help feeling that little stray lock of hair was purposely left to curl over your forehead at its own sweet will! Now, don't keep me in suspense; tell me at once what it all means."

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"Do I look so changed? does it really show so much as that?" said Miss Temple, the smile broadening over her face. "But I might be sure—of course it must show, and I really don't mind its showing to you, my dear"—taking Mabel's hands in her own. "Yours is the first friendly face I have seen since the news came. Be glad with me; my happiness has come at last!"

"Indeed, I am, heartily. It does me real good to see you look like that. May I guess what the happiness is?"

"I will tell you. In truth, my heart is so full that I am quite glad to have an opportunity of speaking to one so ready to sympathize. Ah! one can better stand alone in the time of trouble than in joy, I think. How ashamed I ought to feel of my weak doubts and fears!"

"I think I understand. Mr. Worcester is getting on better, and you are going to reward him for his long and patient waiting?"

"Yes; good fortune has come to him at last, quite suddenly and unexpectedly, and in the oddest way. He says he can scarcely realize it yet. In fact, he seems in quite a mental fog as to how it came about. He has received the offer of a good practice near London, for sale through the illness of the owner, and although under the circumstances it was offered for less than it was worth, Allan thinks a good sum must have been given for it. We still have our own little savings in hand to begin with, for the practice has come as a gift to him. There is even the house ready furnished for us to step into, if I do not mind the things being a little shabby and old-fashioned. He could dare to say even that to me in his happiness! And he says I must ask the Leicesters to excuse the usual notice, and let me go to him at once. He wants to take his wife with him when he goes, he says, which must be in two or three weeks"—a delicate flush suffusing her face, and a bright smile in her eyes.

"How good it is to hear! But I do not see anything foggy about it."

"No; it is only the way it has come about which puzzles us. Allan does not know—at least, not for certain—to whom he owes it all. He can only think of one person who might possibly have done it, and that is an old lady whom he brought through a long illness, attending her night and day. She was very poor then, and could only be grateful in words; but she had expectations, and said she would never forget him when she came into her property; therefore, he thinks she must be his anonymous

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friend. Indeed, he knows no other with both the will and the means to do so much for him."

"I am glad," said Mabel, adding, a little absently: "and have you arranged with Mrs. Leicester?"

"She has promised to consider it, and I think that may be taken to mean assent."

But Miss Temple was not so much absorbed in the contemplation of her own good fortune as to be long deceived by Mabel's assumed gaiety. After one or two glances at the other's colourless face and heavy eyes, she went on more gravely:

"But I fear you are not well! I hope nothing has occurred to trouble you since we last met? You do not find the work here too hard, do you?"

A hot flush rose to Mabel's brow.

"Oh, no," she murmured, endeavouring to smile, as her eyes met the kindly ones bent upon her. But, after a moment or two's reflection, she confessed to feeling a little dispirited and tired of her surroundings. "Life seems so—unsatisfying and—difficult sometimes," she added.

Miss Temple became more grave; putting her hand gently on the other's, and striving to keep back any further expression of her own happiness. But this, Mabel was quick to see, and protest against.

"It will do me so much good to hear about yourself and Mr. Worcester; do believe it," her voice breaking a little, as she added, "I want to—I must—hold fast to something, real and true!"

Miss Temple looked into the yearning eyes, and did believe it. Mabel's was the nature to be helped and strengthened by the knowledge of another's good. She therefore indulged herself in a little further talk in the same strain. "I hope I do not seem too effusive," she presently went on, laying her hand with a warm pressure upon the other's. "I do not readily make friendships—indeed, I have not the opportunity for so doing—but my heart has gone out to you from the first. You must give me a promise to come and see me in my new home, during the holidays, you know," with the remembrance that the holidays had been the dreariest portion of her own life. She had, indeed, been only too thankful to obtain an engagement during the weeks she was supposed to be recruiting her strength.

What would it be for this young, inexperienced girl, evidently

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accustomed to a life of luxury! How would she be able to endure the having to spend her holidays in a little back room, anxiously counting the cost of each day's food? And—alas! the pity of it!—her very beauty might add to the difficulties of her position! It must not be! Jane Temple would not deserve her own good fortune did she not hold out a hand to help a fellow-woman—that would be part of her happiness by-and-by. "Yes," she added, "I must have your promise for that much, at least."

"Kind that you are!" murmured Mabel. "Could you only know how much good it is doing me just to believe in you!"

"She has lost faith in some one!" was Miss Temple's quick thought. "A disappointment, perhaps," as Mabel went on—

"Yes; I promise to come and see how you bear your happiness." Following out a thought which the other did not perceive, she presently said, "Your experience of life has not been a very bright one until now. Yet it has done you no harm, because you have borne it so bravely, but I——"

"You have set your standard so high—you expect so much, and have not perhaps had sufficient experience to put up with anything less than perfection."

"Yes, I know I ought to be quite perfect myself to be so critical of others. I am always striking out at something," a little bitterly.

"There is worse than striking out. It would be better if we could all show our detestation of certain things more plainly, and if," with a little smile and gentle pressure of Mabel's hand, "we could do so without personality. How difficult to preach to you, and from such a text as expediency! I much prefer you just as you are—how much! But, for your own sake. Ah, well, it will come—all too soon, and I will attempt to impart no more worldly wisdom, to-day at any rate."

"It would do me good to learn anything you have to teach. I should be only too glad to learn to keep myself as well in hand as you have kept yourself."

"Do not wish it! It has served its purpose with me, but there is something better than learning to keep one's feelings out of sight, and that is, I fear, all I have succeeded in doing. I have been associated with people from whom it would have been bad policy to differ, and I have not differed, that is all."

"Well, you will now be able to make up for lost time, you know. You can indulge your wicked propensities to your heart's content, within the precincts of your own home," said Mabel.

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"I did not know how much I had rebelled, until my happiness came," musingly went on Miss Temple, dwelling on the thought. "Do you know," with a shy smile and faint blush, "I feel quite awkward and stupid, and out of date, about some things. Our love-making has been carried on entirely upon paper, and I feel a little afraid lest I may appear——"

"A goose!" put in Mabel, with a little smile. "Do not trouble yourself about that, the goose season is just setting in. Besides, it is very likely that he, too, may forget to be wise for a time, and therefore he will not mind. It may do you both good to be geese for a while, after being examples of propriety so long. There is my bit of philosophy in return for yours, my dear."

Their attention was claimed by the children for awhile, and in one of the pleasant little talks afterwards Mabel was fain to acknowledge that her interest in her work was decreasing rather than otherwise, and that she found her charges more than ever difficult to manage. "If it were only an hour or two every day, it might be endurable—but twelve! Enough to make one quite idiotic. I really believe that we could not exist together a day, but for our tempers. They clear the air a little, and oblige us to make some allowance for each other. It is not that they are ill-natured. No, you must not think that—they are quite as good-hearted as other children, I suppose. But they just bore me to death, at least Algy and Mima do, and they drag poor Sissy down to their level, in the way of preventing her giving expression to her ideas."

"I can understand how difficult it is for you. But do not be discouraged—you will find it all come easier as time goes on. In a year or two——"

"A year or two!" hotly began Mabel. But she recollected again, and a little confusedly added, "I suppose being used to it would make a difference. The only child I have known was so very unlike these. I was brought up with an only sister, who—but it is no use beginning about my Dorrie, now. You will know her soon, I hope, and will then be able to judge for yourself."

"Ah, your sister! Engaged in some mission work, I think you said? Is she like you?" asked Miss Temple, a little curiously.

"In appearance, I think—but, as far as the rest, no! She is sweet, and strong, and true, and takes life very much in earnest

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—devoted to an idea. But you must know her—in a little while you will, I hope; and then—" with a meditative glance at the other, "I shall have something to ask forgiveness for."

"I must do my best not to seem too curious."

"Yes, you have no time to indulge in idle speculation. All your spare moments must be devoted to making yourself lovely for Mr. Worcester. Your hair will have to be dressed differently, to begin with; three or four more little rings must be brought out to keep that one timid attempt at a curl in countenance (I feel sure Mr. Worcester will require five at least); and you must learn to be more daring in the matter of pretty laces and things. Come and let me shock you with some of my *chiffon*."

CHAPTER XXI.

NEWS.

Mrs. Brandreth not ungraciously accorded Mabel leave of absence for a day, but it was not by her orders that the brougham was in readiness to convey the governess to the railway station. Nor did she guess that her brother-in-law, who had gone by an earlier train, had said a few words to the station-master, asking him to see after Miss Leith on her arrival, and put her into a carriage by herself in charge of the guard.

She had sat with down-bent head, and hands clasped in her lap, striving to prepare herself to hear what she had to hear, in such a way as not to arouse her sister's suspicions, and alternately longing for, and dreading the meeting. By the time she reached the terminus, she had so far succeeded, that everything was, for the moment, forgotten, but the one fact that she was going to see Dorrie. How in the world had she contrived to exist so long without seeing Dorrie?

The guard spoke to a porter, who, duly impressed with her importance, was careful in his selection of a cab, and the directions given to the driver. When the cab drew up before Mrs. Harcourt's house, a carriage had just been driven away, and the hall door was still open. With breathless eagerness Mabel ran up the steps, and, addressing the astonished-looking manservant, asked: "Is Miss Leith in, James? Where is Mrs. Harcourt?'

Both Miss Leith and her aunt were out, he informed her

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Bidding him send Parker to her, she turned into the dining-room. Even this little check seemed, in her excitement, ominous. It had not occurred to her that both might be from home. Parker, who presently came solemnly in, was in no mood to cheer her, being somewhat depressed, and out of humour on her own account. A new life was opening out for her beloved young mistress; and Parker felt that she herself would be less necessary to it than heretofore, and resented this in her own way.

After a word or two in reply to Mabel's enquiries, she informed her that her young mistress had gone to the East-end . . . that dreadful Grigg's Court, where they were making such alterations, and there was no knowing when she would return; it might be only in time to dress for dinner. "And Mrs. Harcourt has gone out to luncheon, poor lady!"

"You said my aunt is well, didn't you, Parker?"

"She bears up, Miss Mabel, wonderfully considering," lugubriously returned Parker, not being able to state positively that anything ailed Mrs. Harcourt. She would have preferred just then to say that the little lady was ill in bed. As it was she could only shake her head and look grave. "It is not easy to keep up her spirits and find amusement for herself, left so much alone as she is."

"Well, I am glad to hear she does find it," a little impatiently said Mabel.

"I do not know that she does," perversely returned Parker. "At any rate, it is only natural she should prefer to be with her own flesh and blood to going amongst strangers, Miss Mabel."

"Where is she lunching to-day?"

"At Colonel West's."

"Well, she will not be dull there, you know, with five or six young ladies to cheer her."

"They are not her nieces," determined to make Mrs. Harcourt appear a martyr.

"Dear old auntie! I shall soon be home now, Parker, and then I shall have nothing to do but to attend to her," with a little half sigh. "The carriage is out, I suppose? Will you send for a cab for me while I run up to say how do you do to Milner. I must follow my sister at once?"

"Why not let me go for you? Miss Leith will return quickly enough when she knows you are here."

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"Oh, no, I could not wait."

"At least let me accompany you," pleaded Parker, who had it on her mind that she had used a little subterfuge that morning, mentioning that she was not well, in the hope that if she could not go her mistress would for once stay away from that dreadful court. The only result was, that her mistress had slipped off without her. "You can have no idea what a place it is, Miss Mabel."

"Where my sister can go, I can, Parker; and there is not the least necessity for you to accompany me. I am so much more experienced than I was, you know," with some dignity.

"Experienced, indeed!" murmured Parker, as she presently stood watching Mabel's departure in the cab. "But no doubt Mr. Aubyn will be there, and he will look after them. He's got the sense to see that young ladies who take such vagaries into their heads require some looking after, or else he wouldn't be so particular about doing it. One thing is certain, if he likes her to go there he likes me to go with her. But it won't be for long now, I think. She will soon have something better to think of."

The cab stopped a short distance from the archway which the driver informed Mabel led to Grigg's Court. She alighted, and, bidding him wait, passed on, not a little curious as to what kind of place it was, and what kind of people lived there to enlist Dorothy's sympathies so much as they did. With the remembrance of the precautions that had been used in the way of taking his number, and giving him careful directions not to lose sight of her for ten minutes without making enquiries about her, the cabman stood gazing speculatively after her, asking himself what could have brought a young lady of her kind from Kensington to Grigg's Court, and alone. "Well, the sight of her will do 'em good, I should think, whoever they are. They don't often see the like of her about here."

Mabel passed under the archway, walking more slowly as she advanced, and looking doubtfully about her. "What a place! How in the world can Dorrie spend so much of her time here?" she wondered, pausing as she emerged into the court to gather up her delicately tinted gown from contact with the black slimy mud, and stepping upon the toes of her boots, not made for walking in such places as Grigg's Court. "Horridly dirty!" she added, pausing again after a few steps, and unconsciously speaking aloud.

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At that moment she found herself suddenly confronted by a tall, slatternly-looking woman, with a coarse red face, surmounted by a heap of tangled, dusty hair, her doubled fists planted on her hips.

"Who are you, I should like to know?" she exclaimed in a harsh, strident voice. "A fine madam a-coming here and a-calling names, indeed!"

Another woman, and a man without a coat, though not apparently for the purpose of showing the whiteness of his linen, had now joined the speaker.

"I did not mean——" began Mabel.

"You didn't mean, indeed; a fine, dressed-up——"

"What is it?—Who is she?—What's she done, Hemmer?" ejaculated a younger woman of the same type as the first, coming up with breathless eagerness, twisting her back hair into a knob as she came.

"Called us horrid and dirty."

"Oh, no, indeed," once more put in Mabel, beginning to feel a little nervous as the group about her increased; other women hastening up in twos and threes, some fastening their dresses as they came, as though they had just put their babies down to run out.

"You did!" exclaimed the first woman, shaking her fist at Mabel; adding, as she turned rapidly from one to the other, "I heerd her say it with my own ears—horrid and dirty!"

"Horrid and dirty!" the words were caught up from one to the other, until to Mabel's dazed sense the air around was filled with the sound. Only the man remained mute, his eyes fastened upon her face.

"A-coming here and calling us names because we are poor!"

"That for your finery!"—snatching Mabel's parasol, snapping the ivory handle in two, and throwing it on to the ground.

"And that!" said another, whisking off the rosebuds from her lace bonnet.

"And that! And that!"—as others snatched the knots of ribbon from her gown, and proudly showed their contempt for finery by trampling upon it where it lay.

Mabel now recognized something of what Grigg's Court was capable of when its angry passions were aroused, and heartily wished she had taken Parker's advice not to venture there alone. But although she was so much taken by surprise as to be for the

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moment passive, making no attempt to defend her "finery," she gave no signs of being vanquished or intimidated. Her head drawn proudly back, her cheeks flushed, and her lips compressed, she stood silently eyeing her antagonists as they snatched one thing after another from her, her hair partly dragged on to one shoulder by the energy of the tugs which had been given to pull the rosebuds from her bonnet.

"Now what have you got to say for yourself? What do you want here a-coming and a-calling names?"

"Looking down upon us, and showing off as if she was a lady born, 'cause she's got a bit of finery on!" Grigg's Court being of the opinion that a "lady born" might naturally be expected to show off.

They believed that Miss Leith was working in their interests only as a superior kind of mission woman would do, not doubting the statement she made, which she felt to be true, to the effect that she was spending money entrusted to her. They hardly as yet realized how great was the influence she had already gained over them.

"Let me pass, if you please!"

"No we won't, if you please!"—promptly and decidedly. But not accustomed to make war against an adversary who defended herself in this way, so quietly, proudly, and without retort in kind, their energies were beginning to flag a little, when her request gave them fresh impetus, and, with renewed spirits, they recommenced:

"We did not ask you to come, did we? What did you come here for?"

Mabel's heart was beating rather fast as she looked from one to the other menacingly facing her whichever way she turned, though she still would not allow them to see any sign of fear. Meeting their eyes, she said:

"How can I tell you what I came for, if you will not let me speak?"

"Come, there is something in that, you know," put in the man. "There's no harm in hearing what she's got to say."

Curiosity now kept them silent a few moments, and Mabel went on:

"If this is Grigg's Court, I came here to find my sister."

"And who is she, I should like to know? Fine ladies like angel don't want to know poor sisters, and there ain't anyone defied to people lives here." out making the

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"My sister comes here, I think; her name is Leith."

"Miss Leith! Does she mean *our* Miss Leith?"—looking from one to the other and falling back a little, with reddening faces, as they began to recognize the likeness.

Mabel saw that she had made some impression, and, feeling that the worst was over, breathed more freely again.

"Why didn't you say you was Miss Leith's sister, and why did you begin by a-calling names, as Hemmer Brett says you did?"

"She was mistaken. I said this place is horribly dirty, and so it is, you know; but I had not even seen your friend when I spoke, and therefore could not possibly have called her dirty;" mentally adding, as she turned her eyes upon Emma Brett, "although I might have done so with perfect truth."

As though partly recognizing what was in her mind, Emma Brett reddened, and pulled together a long rent in her gown, murmuring something to the effect that "people who were not fine ladies couldn't be so over particular about theirselves as never to have a speck of dirt about 'em."

"Well, there ain't no gainsaying as the place is dirty," said one of the women in a conciliatory tone. "It's a'most always wet and squashy; but everybody here knows that, and perhaps the young lady didn't notice the stones put to step upon across the puddles, and no one likes sp'iling their best clothes. It's a-going to be paved for us; but everything can't be done at once." Confused and ashamed now, as well as apprehensive, lest by their attack upon her sister they should have offended past forgiveness Miss Leith, who seemed to have so much power put into her hands, and to be so ready to use it in their behalf, they were desirous of shifting the blame from themselves, and turned angrily upon Emma Brett.

"What did you begin by telling lies about the young lady for, making us think she'd been speaking ag'in us, and showing off, when she hadn't been doing nothing of the sort—only said as the place is dirty? And that's true enough, as everybody can see for themselves."

Mabel began again to explain that it had been only a mistake, which did not matter now; and Emma Brett was quick to hurl a challenge at any one who dared to accuse her of telling lies, [illegible] the young lady herself said it had been only a mistake. capable [illegible] shocked by the volley of abuse that followed, Mabel wished she [illegible] away under the escort of a young woman who But although sh[illegible]

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volunteered to show her where her sister was. They found Dorothy in one of the lower rooms of a house where extensive repairs were being carried on amidst a din and confusion strange and bewildering enough to Mabel; the workmen's hammers, the sawing of wood, and clatter of voices mingling in a Babel of sound.

In the midst of it all stood Dorothy, quiet and smiling, listening, pencil and note-book in hand, to some explanations from a carpenter.

"You think it would better stand the tear and wear?"

"I'm certain sure of that, miss. No use putting quarter-inch wainscot here."

"And the difference would be how much?"

"A matter of twenty pounds for the ten houses—not more, miss."

"I will mention it to Mr. Aubyn, and he will let you know."

As the man turned away, she caught sight of Mabel, and in another moment they were in each other's arms, lookers-on and everything else forgotten in the first delight of meeting.

"But—what has happened?" asked Dorothy the next moment, taking note of her sister's dishevelled condition; anxiously adding, "Dear Mab, has there been an accident? Are you hurt?"

"Oh, no, not in the least; it is nothing," smilingly returned Mabel. "I was taken for an enemy in the camp, that is all. It was quite my own fault for not making myself better understood when I first entered the court."

"You were attacked! Oh, Mabel, how could they!"

"It was thought that I meant to attack. Just a mistake, that was all, Dorrie," turning to give the girl who had accompanied her a half-sovereign, with a word or two to the effect that she hoped peace would be made.

Half-a-sovereign! Full of gratitude at such unheard-of generosity from one who had been so badly treated, the girl went off to sing Mabel's praises, as "one of the right sort, with real grit in her." She found the others ready enough to listen. The tide had completely turned in Mabel's favour, and she would have been not a little surprised as well as amused could she have heard the extravagant praises now lavished upon her. Any one hardy enough to hint that she was less than an angel in appearance, speech, or manners, would have been defied to mortal combat. Moreover, they at once set about making the

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best reparation in their power for the "mistake." Her parasol was hurriedly carried to the cobbler to have its handle nailed together; while some pink tissue paper was got at a neighbouring shop in which to pin up the flowers and knots of ribbon, carefully smoothed out, to be presented with apologies on her departure.

Dorothy, who had drawn Mabel aside, was saying in a low voice:

"You should not appear to have money here, Mab dear."

"Why, it seems to me just the place where money is most required," replied Mabel, glad to be able to talk of anything in order to gain time before touching upon more personal matters.

"No; the worst in the world for the exercise of charity of that kind. It was the first lesson I had to learn."

"But they appear to me in the lowest state of destitution, Dorrie—the very lowest; not even able to buy a scrap of soap to wash their dirty faces. Oh, Dorrie, the dirt, and the—the rest!"

"I know what it must seem to you, dearie. It is really very terrible, and at first I thought it quite hopeless; but a bit of sunshine is making its way to us."

"I do not see any. To me it seems quite dreadful to find you alone here amongst such——"—Mabel glanced round to make sure no one was near, then added in a low voice, "tigers! Well, then, tigresses," with smiling persistency in reply to Dorothy's shake of the head. "I think I should have been almost torn to pieces had I not mentioned your name."

"Perhaps you allowed it to be seen that you were shocked at the appearance of things."

"That is very likely, I think."

"And you were too well dressed, dearie. This is the kind of thing for Grigg's Court," touching her own coarse dust-coloured serge gown. "But under the best conditions this is no place for you."

"Why not, if it is the place for you, Dorrie?" a little irritably, with the consciousness of the repulsion she felt. "Do you think I could not learn to overcome the wretched pride, or whatever it is, which makes me shrink from it now?"

"It is not pride, dear Mab; who can know that better than I? Nor do I think you could ever overcome it. Moreover, I do not see any necessity for you to try."

"You think there is no sphere of usefulness for me?" still a little irritably. "I am to be one of the drones of life."

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"Not at all. *We* think"—with slight emphasis and a smile—"you have a very large field of labour—in society. Coarseness and dirt are not the only evils in the world, nor the worst and most difficult to cope with. But we can go into that another time. We must go home at once. I am longing to know more than your letters have told me. Indeed, I could not have borne the separation so well had I not heard how bravely you were getting on from—him," blushing and hesitating a little, while the colour, like an answering beacon, flamed into Mabel's cheeks. It seemed that both shrank from being the first to mention his name.

"What are you going to do in this place, Dorrie?" asked Mabel, to hide her confusion.

"We are hoping to do a great many things, and are making these houses more habitable, to begin with. Afterwards—Well, the chief aim is to help these poor people to help themselves."

"That sounds well, and of course there can be no question as to the motive," said Mabel; "but it seems to me the chief want, to begin with, is soap, and that shall be my contribution. If they could be taught the use of combs and brushes it would be another step in the right direction," adding a little hurriedly, after a moment's pause, forcing herself to mention his name, "What does auntie—what does Gerard think about it?"

"We only tell auntie as much from time to time as she is able to bear. As for Gerard, he laughs at us, of course, and talks of political economy."

"Mr. Aubyn?"

"Let those laugh that win, he says. We shall at least, I think, succeed so far as to prove to these poor people that there are those that care for them, and that will give them faith in something to begin with. But you must not think Gerard is really unconcerned. He foretells all sorts of disastrous consequences for us, of course, or he would not be Gerard; but we know he is watching every step we take with the greatest interest."

"Is he?"

"Oh, yes; you and I know he is very different from what he would have people believe him to be. None will be more disappointed than Gerard if we fail. He could not make *us* disbelieve in him, however he might try, could he?"

"It—is—good to hear you say it, Dorrie," said Mabel, with a choking sensation in her throat.

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"How could it be otherwise?" smilingly adding, "Think of it, Mab—he has actually been finding things out for himself amongst the people here, and in another and worse place came dressed as a workman, to listen to the evening lectures—talks, Reginald calls them—to the men in the schoolroom. But he does not suspect we are aware of it, so do not say a word. Reginald said he had at first a great mind to ask the young man in the fustian coat and the white tie—Gerard had forgotten to change that—to come on to the platform and give them the benefit of his advice upon some question they were discussing, but thought better of it. You see, Gerard would be sure to be equal to the occasion, and might, perhaps, completely turn the tables upon us."

"Reginald!" repeated Mabel, looking at her sister in some surprise. It was not like Dorothy to speak in that familiar way, although she must have been brought into very friendly relations with him in their mutual efforts for the benefit of the people in Grigg's Court.

"Oh, Gerard and he are like brothers, you know. He will be Reginald with you soon," with a gay little laugh. "But we must get away from this din to have our talk. At home we shall be better able to hear ourselves speak. Let me put you just a little more neat first, dearie, or we shall cause too much of a sensation at home. You look almost as though you had been in the midst of a sort of fight," with loving hands proceeding to tuck up the masses of gold-brown hair, straighten the remains of Mabel's bonnet, and otherwise make her more presentable.

"Well, it was a sort of fight, so far as your amiable *protégés* could make it one," said Mabel, going on to explain that she had a cab waiting for her outside.

When they presently passed through the court it was quiet enough, and apparently deserted, although they were watched by many curious eyes from behind ragged blinds and half-closed shutters. When they had got to the archway, a little girl, showing signs of having been hurriedly prepared for the occasion, her face red and shining from the effects of recent friction, her hair tied back with a piece of string, and the rents in her frock pinned together, came timidly forwards.

"Mother's respects, and she's sorry you was mistook; and she sends this, if you please, miss," said the child, presenting the mended parasol and a pink-paper parcel containing the remainder of the "finery" Mabel had been so summarily deprived of.

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Mabel took them with a nod and smile to the child, but in somewhat gingerly fashion, and was about to toss them away, when Dorothy hurriedly laid a restraining hand upon her arm, saying in a low voice, "Not yet, not here, Mab dear; they might see, and we must not appear unappreciative of the feeling which prompted the return of the things;" adding, as they walked on, "It is something quite new for Grigg's Court to acknowledge itself in the wrong, much less to make the *amende*—quite a feather in our cap, I call it."

On their way to Kensington both sisters were rather silent. Mabel was striving to gain courage for the ordeal still to be gone through—the examination she knew would begin as soon as they reached home; and Dorothy, smiling and happy, seemed content to have her beloved young sister's hand in her own, and to feel that they were once more together again. They found that Mrs. Harcourt had not returned, and went at once to Dorothy's room. While Parker assisted her young mistress to change her gown—a necessary process after a visit to Grigg's Court—Mabel went to and fro between her own room and her sister's, excited and restless. But she was not too absorbed to notice that her room was arranged as though she might be expected at any moment. Milner told her that everything was kept ready for her reception day by day, even to the putting fresh flowers.

As soon as they were alone Dorothy gently forced her sister into a low chair, and knelt on the carpet by her side.

"Oh, Dorrie, you mustn't! How shall I be able to keep away again?"

"Dear Mab, why should you? Are you still determined to keep away so long?"

"I thought I was—until I saw you!"

"But now you have changed your mind, and are going to make us happy by coming back at once?" eagerly.

"Why should you wish me to change it? You have not changed yours, Dorrie. Besides, I have really been gaining experience, if nothing else. But for the governessing I might never have known what I am capable as well as incapable of. I am afraid I am not quite so proficient as I imagined myself to be," with a little laugh that had not the intended effect upon her sister.

"Why do you talk in that way? What has come to you, Mab?" seeing more than the words expressed, and now that the

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flush of excitement had left her sister's face, another change. "You are getting quite thin and worried-looking!"

"Come to me? I was never fat, you foolish Dorrie!" a hot flush rising to her cheeks again.

"Are you quite sure you have not been working too hard?" enquired Dorothy, taking her sister's glowing face between her own two hands, and gazing anxiously into the half-averted eyes. Mabel's face suddenly whitened again. Her shame had left its mark then, she was thinking. Dorothy could evidently see enough to arouse her fears that something had occurred. What if she were to guess the real truth? "Gerard always said you were well and happy," went on Dorothy. "They both said you were getting on splendidly; but——"

"Cannot you believe Gerard?" put in Mabel, endeavouring to speak lightly. After a moment or two she hurriedly went on, "It is good to hear him speak of you, Dorrie; he has so much respect as well as——"

"Dear old Gerard! How glad I am that he and Reginald are such good friends! They understand each other so well, do they not?"

"Yes," slowly and heavily; then, with her arms round Dorothy's waist and her face hidden on her breast as she knelt she went on, "You have something to tell me, haven't you, Dorrie? Mr. Aubyn gave me a hint what to expect."

"You like him, do you not, Mabel?"

"Mr. Aubyn? Who could help liking him?"

"Dear Mab, he has been very open with me, and I tell him it is quite natural he should have liked you first," thinking she knew now what made Mabel a little disturbed. "But he soon understood how things were, and he says now that I am more suited to him than you would have been, and I really think I am, dearie."

"He?" faltered out Mabel. "Of whom are you speaking?"

"Why, Reginald, of course! Have I not been telling you? Oh, Mabel, what is it?"

Mabel had sprung to her feet, and was gazing at her with wide eyes, blanching to the lips. Clasping her head between her hands, afraid of trusting to her senses, she ejaculated, in a hurried, broken voice—

"Do you mean that you love Mr. Aubyn, and are engaged to him? Do you mean that—oh, Dorrie, that?"

"Yes." Looking at her sister's wild, white face, a new fear

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suddenly crossed Dorothy's mind, and she added, "Are you not glad to hear it, Mab dear?"

"Glad!" But she could not go on. Her mind had been overwrought, and this sudden revulsion of feeling, after striving to prepare herself for so different a communication, the terror she had been in lest, at the supreme moment, she should not be able to prevent Dorothy from suspecting her secret, was more than she could bear. She broke into a wild ebullition of tears and sobs, realizing more fully now the misery she had escaped. He had said that his love was his life—how deeply the words had cut into her heart!—and she knew now that hers also was her life. And mingled with it all was the sharp pang of remembrance of the blow she had given him. To have thrust away his love in the way she had done—to have almost reviled him for feeling it! She must have seemed cruel, as well as unloving. Would he ever forgive her? But it was hardly a question of his love for her at that moment, in the sudden relief of finding she might without shame love him.

Gravely and anxiously, but silently, Dorothy drew her towards a couch, and lovingly tended her. She had never before seen Mabel like this—so strangely different from her usual self. Frank, outspoken, and impulsive as she was, she was yet capable of great self-command on emergency, and could be even reticent of her deeper feelings. What was the cause of this sudden ebullition? Dorothy asked herself, the fear that had been creeping upon her that things were not quite what she had imagined them to be taking more tangible shape. Was it possible that Mabel cared for Reginald instead of, as she had imagined, Gerard? Was that the solution of the problem?

Mabel was beginning to make more effort to restrain her feelings, and as soon as she grew calmer, Dorothy repeated, in a low, hesitating tone—

"Dear Mab, are you glad?"

"Glad! To know that you are going to be happy, and that in the sight of Heaven Gerard is good and true! Oh, Dorrie, the joy of it!"

"I really do not understand."

"Perhaps you never will quite. I may never be able to tell you quite all; but—— Here, look into my eyes, Dorrie, and see how happy your news has made me. Happy! Ah, how tame and poor words seem!"

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"Then why are you so excited? It is not like you, Mab," said Dorothy, still a little puzzled as to why the knowledge of her engagement should have brought about such an outburst of feeling, and why there should be so much astonishment and relief at finding that Gerard was what he had always been believed to be.

"Don't begin with your dear old 'why's,' Dorrie." Sobering a little, she presently added, "What if I fancied it was wrong to care for Gerard?"

"Wrong? How could that be?"

"If you cared for him, it would be."

"Cared for him—I—I—in that way? Oh, Mab, ridiculous! How could you suppose that? The other day, when I was telling auntie what to expect, she seemed very much surprised, and said she quite thought it was going to be Gerard. It is strange enough that she should make such a mistake; but really, Mab, you! I cannot understand it. Why, you ought to have seen it long ago—every one ought to have seen it was you. I have known it for years, since almost he was a boy. Indeed, he made no secret of it to me; it was that that made it so pleasant between us, and I hoped—I quite believed—that you—— Ah, yes; of course you do! How could it be otherwise between you two?" her face brightening as she took note of the tell-tale blush that her words brought to her sister's face. A radiant smile shone through Mabel's tears as her eyes met Dorothy's for a moment, then consciously veiled themselves again.

"We were afraid there was some little misunderstanding," went on Dorothy; "but Reginald fancied it was because Gerard had been going too far with his sceptical talk, and that you were beginning to take it too seriously. But you and I know how much more he believes than he acknowledges he does; and, dear Mab, his faith in you has been doing him so much good. Try to think that, for Reginald has been a little anxious about him of late."

"Everything will come right now, Dorrie—I think it will," murmured Mabel, in delightful confusion, telling herself that she would lose no time in setting about making the *amende* to Gerard, and then perhaps—— He must, at any rate, be shown that his love would be no longer scorned. Ah, what she must have seemed to him, to behave as she had, first leading him to believe she cared for him—she must, however,

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inadvertently have done so—and then rejecting him with cruel scorn!

Then remembering that she had not yet offered any congratulations to her sister, she said a few words which, if somewhat incoherent, left no doubt in Dorothy's mind as to her feeling towards Reginald Aubyn. "How happy your news has made me, Dorrie! He is just the one in all the world I should choose for a brother; so good, and strong, and true. Ah, how little I suspected what it was you had to tell when he said you wanted to see me, Dorothy. He told me you had news for me, but I little thought what news."

"I made him promise to give you no hint, because I wanted to tell you myself, dearie."

"It is so delightful to think of him as a brother." Ah, the difference! she thought. The difference from trying to think of Gerard as a brother!

In her desire to catch the four o'clock express she was in a fever of anxiety and impatience to set forth again. She must see Gerard that night, come what would. "Make excuses to auntie for me, Dorrie. Tell her I shall soon be home again, for good now. Yes, I mean to be good, and obedient, and all the rest of it—quite a reformed character!"

Dorothy made no further demur. She thought she quite understood why her sister was in such haste, and only insisted that she should first take some refreshment. Recognizing that it might take less time to obey than to argue, Mabel yielded so far, thus giving the astonished Milner a short time to repair the mischief done to her young mistress's toilette, and afterwards the sisters drove together to the railway station.

"You will explain to Mrs. Brandreth, and arrange to return home as soon as possible, Mab?"

"Yes," nodding and smiling, as the train moved off.

As Dorothy re-seated herself in the brougham, and was driven away, she was dwelling lovingly upon the mental picture she carried with her, of the beautiful rosy face, with the sunny grey-blue eyes, that had looked out at her from the carriage window, no foreshadowing in her mind as to how that face might look when again she saw it.

"Is it possible I am the same girl?" mentally ejaculated Mabel, hardly yet able to realize the great happiness that had come to her. No shame to love him now! Even though her unkindness—how great it must have seemed—how cruel her

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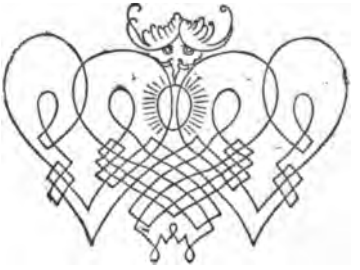
scorn!—should have killed his love for her, though he migh never again care for her, she might love him to the end. Ah, what a glorious old world it was! Gazing out with glad eyes at the pretty scenes she was speeding past, she gaily kissed her hands to the trees and flowers, and bade the winds carry her love to Gerard, laughing softly to herself at the remembrance of the wave sounds, and wondering how long the air would be vibrating with her love to Gerard.

(*To be continued.*)



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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

ASOLO AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.—NOTES FROM PARIS.

ASOLO AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.—I.

THE turrets of Vicenza, and the fine group of mountains behind, were glowing with sunset fires as we steamed across the plain. We had caught the perfect Italian landscape at its most magical moment; a rush through sculptured streets had shown us a pageant in brick and stone; palaces, piazzas and churches, mediæval towers and the Renaissance phantasies of Palladio's theatre. So now the rapidly fading twilight was grateful alike to eyes and brain, and served to confirm our possession of the wonders just seen.

Night had fallen before the train dropped us at Castelfranco. One could barely distinguish the gate of the inner town, surmounted by the lion of St. Mark, once Treviso's best defence against Paduan raids, but now chiefly famed as the shrine of Giorgione's great altar-piece. The painter's statue among the trees on the bastion was only a faint white patch in the darkness, and soon, the lamps of his birthplace left behind, we were jingling along a straight road, between perpetual acacias and Indian corn, only interrupted by numerous cross-ways, one or two hamlets and villas, and here and there a group of dark figures taking their rest after the day's work by squatting sociably in a circle in the dust. On and on, but at last the horses' pace slackened. We were mounting a hill, lights twinkled high above us; rocks, instead of hedges, bordered the road; there was a sound of fast-running water. Higher and higher, between over-arching trees. Suddenly these part, the carriage stops, loved voices shout welcome, we are at Casa Bolzon, at the gates of Asolo!

This towered city on a foothill of the Alps, overhanging the vast Trevisan plain, has a special claim on English hearts as the abode of Robert Browning during the last summer of his life. He had known and loved it from his youth, for on his first Italian journey—straight by sea from London to Venice—he had crossed the plain on foot, to visit the home of Caterina Cornaro, and impressed by the charm of the place, chose it for the scene of "Pippa Passes." Though giving little definite description, save in Ottilia's lines:—

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> "Ah the clear morning! I can see St. Mark's!
> That black streak is the Belfry. Stop: Vicenza
> Should lie. . . . There's Padua plain enough, that blue!"—

one feels that the poet was inspired by the life and landscape of Asolo, its dawns and sunsets, its "crescent moon" rising over the Trevisan plain. Does he not tell us in "Asolando"?—

> "How many a year, my Asolo,
> Since—one step just from sea to land—
> I found you, loved, yet feared you so—
> For natural objects seemed to stand
> Palpably fire-clothed!"

The "one step just" is, however, a long stride even by day with the castle-crowned height as a beacon to cheer one across the level and up the wooded ascent of Foresto della Casella. Asolo climbs two hills, and here to the south, crowning the higher of the twain, stands the rugged shell, brown and windowless, of its ancient Rocca, a stronghold dating from Euganean days. Below, a space of turf and broken ground, vines, oleanders and roses stream down to the terraced villas overhanging the road, while far beneath, the vast plain stretches away to the sea, its greenery transfused with the lovely blue haze peculiar to the south. Innumerable villages and towns are dotted about on the azure space, the sun strikes here and there on tall white church or tower, a streak of mist simulates an inland sea, the silhouettes of Venetian and Paduan belfries cut the horizon, and the Euganean hills are shadowy cones in the middle distance beyond San Zenone, the blood-stained fortress wherein tyrant Eccelino paid the penalty of his crimes. Beyond Montebelluno, to the left, lies Vicenza; Bassano over there to the right, at the lowest step of the mountain chain that curves so grandly round behind Asolo.

Entering the town by a line of common-place houses, we soon come to a massive corner palace in the Renaissance style, pierced by a broad archway, serving as a frame to oleanders and sky. Then, by the windings of an arcaded street, past frescoed fronts and pointed Venetian windows, to the chief Piazza and centre of the town. There, beyond the porticoed flank of the Duomo, is the flight of steps down which Pippa must have passed to the house of the Bishop's brother, whence one has a fine outlook over the plain between cascades of brown roofs and turrets. On the opposite side of the Piazza is a great stone fountain capped by a very grotesque and topheavy lion, and behind this another square slopes steeply up to grey-walled gardens and a huge, many-windowed palace. Here oxen rest beneath rows of horse-chestnuts, and if it be market day, the ground is covered with piles of quaint crockery, ironware, baskets, ribbons, handkerchiefs, rolls of homespun and cotton stuffs, mountains of fruit and vegetables, and crates of unhappy fowls. Here too the "upper ten" of Asolo may be

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seen driving hard bargains shoulder to shoulder with the peasantry, and young beaux, puffing long cigars, stroll about scanning the feminine charms hidden away under fashionable hats or prettily framed in rustic kerchiefs. On the lower Piazza, where the Town Hall, frescoed with faded battle-scenes and encrusted with the arms of ancient Podestás, flanks the church steps, the main street expands into a dignified approach to the royal palace, planted on the summit of the cliff at the edge of the town. How many gay cavalcades must have clattered over these stones in the days of Queen Catharine, and what festive throngs poured through these arcades to greet Her Majesty's passage!

The tall, square keep of the Cornaro Castle, at the turn of the steep causeway, commands a long, narrow cross-street, diving down to another gate, and lined by many massive dwellings. For Asolo is bigger than it seems, contains nearly six thousand inhabitants, and has ranked as a city since the year 1741.

Of the once spacious castle little now survives save the keep, and part of the building containing the Queen's reception room. The former serves as a prison, but its cells are actually untenanted. Caterina's hall is converted into a theatre, and as rehearsals were going on, admission was denied at the time of our visit. But through the custodian's vineyard we gained a ruined turret, and revelled in the view, with an operatic chorus for an accompaniment. Immediately below us lay an irregular space of turf, backed by ruined Cornaro walls, ending in a lower tower connected by a vine trellis with an unfinished house at the farthest edge of the enclosure. This was Robert Browning's favourite haunt, and just before his death he was intending to buy the skeleton building, in order to convert it into a summer retreat. In memory of his father's love for the place, Mr. Barrett Browning has completed the purchase, and being bound to leave the Cornaro walls intact, proposes to carry a road round their base, to render the villa accessible from the street below. It is an ideal spot for a poet's home.

Each day at Asolo developed some fresh fascination, every hour some special charm. Besides enchanting surprises of hill and dale, of cypress-fringed mounts, trickling streams, and grand effects on the peaks above, an endless drama of light and colour was always being played on the plain. Wonderful processions of clouds swept through the sky; sometimes a distant hailstorm was seen transformed into a rain of fire, as the sun suddenly broke forth, or huge trails of mist flew like spectres before gusts of mountain wind. No wonder so many painters come to Asolo! One sees pictures at every turn: groups of country-folk; tricks of sunlight down precipitous lanes; radiant scraps of landscape seen through tunnels of blackened stone; mediæval casements draped with sprays of starry jessamine; gleams of colour in cavernous dens beneath the arcades—everywhere subjects for the brush! An English artist owns the prettiest house in Asolo, on the site of the

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Roman theatre. Wandering among his roses and vines one comes on fallen columns and fragments of sculpture, and a long grass walk between over-arching trees leads to a cool bower, looking forth over the plain. But of course the grandest view of all is from the summit of the hill by the old Rocca. Here too are the remains of a Roman aqueduct, and a line of crumbling fortifications fringes the crest and dips into the valley behind.

The Asolo Museum contains some interesting relics of Caterina Cornaro: her escutcheon, her last will and testament, &c., &c. As all know, the "Sovereign Lady of Asolo" was the niece and adopted daughter of the Venetian Senator, Marco Cornaro, and wife of James II. of Lusignan, fifteenth king of Cyprus. Widowed in 1473, and bereaved of her baby son the following year, she remained nominally Queen of the island until 1488. Then, yielding to pressure, she reluctantly resigned her shadowy power to the firmer grasp of the Republic, and receiving Asolo in exchange, ruled there to her death in 1510. Her full title, as set forth in her signature, was:

"Regina Catherina, aut Catherina Cornelia, de Lusignano Veneta Dei grat. Hier. Cypri et Armeniae Regina ac Domina Asili."

A long letter signed in her terribly illegible hand is also preserved here, and doubtless many other documents will some day be disinterred. At present the archives are in a state of chaos, and waiting, together with the store of Roman and Euganean antiquities, for skilled hands and eyes to reduce them to order. There is an ill-painted picture of the Queen in widow's weeds that must be the basest of caricatures, unless Titian's famous portrait was wholly ideal. For it shows us a snub-nosed, swarthy little person, as undignified as she is plain. Another representation of her may be seen in the Accademia at Venice, in the crowned figure kneeling by the canal in Gentile Bellini's "Miracolo della Croce."

Caterina proved a beneficent sovereign to Asolo, and although she would have preferred to exchange her microscopic dominions for the hand of a Neapolitan prince, made the best of her position by gathering about her a brilliant court. Cardinal Bembo was one of the most devoted of her train, and has celebrated the delights of her realm in his tedious, stilted 'Asolani.' But in 1509 the pleasant little court was scattered by alarms of war, and Caterina fled before the advance of the Imperial forces. Her town was invaded, her palace partially sacked, and although these first assailants were speedily expelled by the Venetians, the place was occupied by Emperor Maximilian the following year, and only restored to the Republic in 1514, for the Lady of Asolo did not live to resume her sway.

Dying in Venice in 1510, she was buried with all the honours of royalty in the Santi Apostoli Church. Then, in 1660, her remains were exhumed, and transferred to their present resting-place in S. Salvatore.

The three lions of Asolo—Caterina Cornaro, Canova, and Browning—

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are strangely jumbled together in the Museum, and though it is easy to find a connecting link between the sixteenth-century Queen and the nineteenth-century poet who has pierced to the inner life of old Italy, the soulless symmetry of the sculptor's "Paris" seems entirely out of place there.

Just now Asolo seems proudest of our poet. His photograph hangs in a place of honour, one of his manuscripts is enshrined in a glass case, and the house in which he stayed bears this inscription:

"Qui abitò Roberto Browning
il sommo poeta inglese
e qui scrisse Asolando."

This house is in the arcaded street between the south gate and the Piazza, and a steep, gloomy staircase leads to the poet's quarters, consisting of two cosy bedrooms, and a tiny salon beyond, up two or three more steps. Evidently the radiance of his mental vision must have made him indifferent to sunshine and prospect, for the windows command nothing but a blank brown wall across the narrow thoroughfare. Such noisy rooms, too, echoing with footsteps and voices from the arcade underneath, and inconveniently near to clanging church bells! But the landlady, a pleasant little woman named Nina Tabacchi, declared that Mr. Browning was not disturbed by these sounds *after the first five nights*, and generally remained indoors writing until four o'clock in the afternoon. Then he went out for a walk, visited his friends, and attended every performance at the "Teatro Sociale" in the Cornaro Castle.

She treasures the inkstand and pens—steel and quill—used by her tenant, although she might have sold them over and over again, together with a cracked washing-basin for which she has been offered fabulous sums. But she is unwilling to part with these relics, as her rooms are in great request with pilgrims to the shrine. Many old English ladies, she said, came to Asolo expressly to enjoy the privilege of sleeping in Mr. Browning's bed!

So Asolo is ahead of Florence, for no inscription in his honour has been added to his wife's memorial tablet on Casa Guidi, where he lived so long, wrote 'Men and Women,' and conceived 'The Ring and the Book.' It chanced that just before his death Florence had felt obliged to check the craze for distinguishing the abodes of very small fry, by decreeing that no man, however great, should be granted a tablet until twenty years deceased. Nevertheless, a longer term having passed since our poet was driven from Florence by the loss of his wife, an exception, one would think, might be made in his favour.

II.

When tired of straining the imagination in the effort to evoke Caterina's vanished court, it is good to drive down the Cornuda road to

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Villa Maser, where eyesight alone is needed to realize the splendours of Renaissance life.

Towards the year 1564, the Venetian Senator, Marc Antonio Barbaro, and his brother Daniele, Patriarch of Aquilea, fixed on Maser as a pleasant resting-place from cares of Church and State, and proceeded to erect a hill-side dwelling suited to the grandeur of their tastes. They summoned Palladio to design the building, Vittoria to decorate it with dainty mouldings, and Paolo Veronese to people walls and ceilings with all the gods of Olympus.

The result is an Ionic temple, backed by woods rising gently from the plain. It is approached by a stiff stone avenue of statues, balustrades, sculptured flowers and fountains dividing trim squares of vines and turf, and flanked on either side by a portico, ending in a circular pavilion. On a summer day the general effect is almost as dazzling as that of a quarry or chalk pit, and the tropical foliage of palms and bamboos by the doorway only intensify the impression of heat. A big, white fountain faces the entrance in the white road below, and a little farther on stands a white church in the likeness of a Roman temple, formerly the Barbaro Chapel. The view from Maser is inferior to that from Asolo. The same luxuriant plain stretches before us, but we are too near its level to appreciate its charms, and a scrubby, flat-faced ridge to the left blocks out the undulating land in the direction of Belluno. But doubtless the builders of this Renaissance house were quite satisfied with the prospect. With the towers of Venice faintly visible on the horizon, what more could be desired? They were in the country, yet all vulgar details of country life were masked by trim ranges of arcades.

We know that Marc Antonio's fingers sought relief from penning official papers in modelling some of the adornments of his monumental avenue, and probably the rockwork grotto and fountain behind the house satisfied any craving for the romantic in his highly-cultured soul. Given the artificial tastes of Renaissance grandees, Maser must have proved an ideal retreat. And, as a shrine of art, it is worth a pilgrimage from any part of Europe, much less from neighbouring Asolo. Lovers of Venetian painting owe gratitude to the magnificent amateur who called Veronese to enrich his walls with those splendid frescoes. The master plied his task *con amore*, and inspired perhaps by the wide horizon and rural landscape, has introduced open-air effects into his mythological scenes, and treated his divinities in a light-hearted manner, as if they too had fled the constraints of court life, and were taking their ease in the country.

The interior of this Palladian temple is ingeniously adapted to the needs of Venetian domesticity. It is in the shape of a cross, its length forming a *sala* running from back to front, just as in a palace on the Grand Canal. The sole decorations here are allegorical figures *en grisaille*, placed in false niches and surrounded by frescoed trophies of

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arms. The vault of the central cupola is peopled with colossal divinities, Jupiter, Apollo, Venus, &c., all in unconventional, unstudied attitudes. Beneath, arranged over and against a frieze or balustrade, are some charming figures; a fair girl, a boy with one of the painter's favourite hounds, a page reading, a monkey, parrot and child. But best of all are the frescoes in the side rooms. Here Pagan goddesses face Virgins and Saints, and Bacchus peeps forth beside Venetian dames through a trellis of grape-laden vines. In the daintiest of these chambers, above a carved mantel-piece—too huge for the room one ventures to think—there is a group of musicians so living and fresh that one almost hopes to hear the sound of their lutes. Veronese has turned every inch of space to account, seemingly bent on leaving no corner unfilled, and surprising his patrons by delicate freaks of fancy. One can imagine him quitting his work to greet the Barbaro brothers just arrived from Venice, and guiding them through a litter of paint-pots and plaster to inspect his newest achievements, while his pupils ceased from grinding colours or preparing surfaces to hear their master praised. Then would come supper, enlivened by much art talk and the latest news from the capital, and a stroll on the hillside in the summer dusk when fire-flies were flashing over the fields and a breath of sea air drifting across the plain.*

Another lovely drive leads to Possagno, Canova's birthplace, at the foot of Monte Grappa; and although the progress of art has lessened this sculptor's renown, it is interesting to find so many of his works in the gallery annexed to his abode. Also, noting the power and individuality of his portrait busts, it seems amazing that his talent should shrink to mere Academic prettiness in all imaginative designs. He proved his love for his native village by building a church there at his own expense on the model of the Pantheon. But dying in Venice in 1822, three years after laying the first stone, he missed the joy of seeing it completed. The labour of love was carried on by his brother, according to the terms of his will, and consecrated in 1830. Canova's remains were then brought to Possagno and buried in the Rotonda opposite his famous Pietà. The building is a fine thing of its kind, a great white temple against the mountain side, at the head of an imposing flight of steps, and faced by a huge portico supported on sixteen Doric columns of native marble. We had the luck to see it on a festival day; a musical Mass was in course of performance, the vast area of the church was thronged, and many worshippers had overflowed among the shafts of the atrium. Presently as the last organ notes pealed, a most picturesque crowd poured forth into the sunlight, streaming down the steps in cascades of colour. Women and children in bright-hued kerchiefs and flowing white veils, men—mostly tall, comely fellows—in brown or olive fustian and brilliant red and blue ties. To the left of the church a rocky

* For a detailed account of the Maser frescoes, *vide* Yriarte's 'Un Patricien de Vénise.'

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path winds between cypresses and shrines to a Calvary chapel perched aloft. It is an exciting side scene, wild and Alpine, in strange contrast with the classic centre-piece of glittering white temple and pompous approach. There, a suggestion of primitive, old-world faith; here, all the pride and splendour of Papal Rome.

LINDA VILLARI.

NOTES FROM PARIS.

There is certainly at the present time a degree of social fermentation which in France is felt in all classes, and deserves the most serious attention of legislators and politicians. The strikes are in constant succession; no sooner is one ended by arbitration and concessions, than others begin, with new exigences and new claims. The most horrible murders are of daily occurrence, and even in the streets of Paris life is no longer safe. The police, so admirably organized during the Empire, is now thoroughly inefficient, and never at hand when wanted. Then the recent instances when dynamite has been employed, reveal a new and terrible danger. The attempt on the lives of the Ministers—the explosion in the house of the Marquis de Trévise—that which occurred at St. Denis—constitute very serious warnings as to what may be expected from the desperate men, who shrink from no disastrous consequences, when they hope to reach success by frightening their antagonists. Even in the last awful railway catastrophe the question has been raised as to whether the real cause was not wilful malevolence—whether the wrong signal was not purposely turned, and whether the flaw discovered in the brake had not been maliciously contrived. To kill fifty unoffending travellers, and wound two hundred more, merely to spite a railway company, would be fiendish enough; but no one seems to think the case improbable.

The strangest feature of these modern complications is the sudden change of front on the part of the clergy in favour of Socialism, approved by the enlightened Pope Leo XIII.—their unexpected adhesion to the Republican government which gives the "*coup de grâce*" to the Royalist cause.

The first is evidently intended, like the eloquence of the German Emperor, as a means of guiding and restraining what would otherwise carry all before it, causing general devastation; but Pius IX. tried also to lead a Revolution, and found that silken ribbons were not of much use to hold in the popular wild beast going forth "seeking whom he may devour!"

During the Republic of 1848, the populace sought the clergy, and called upon them to bless the "arbres de la liberté"—yet, the Archbishop of Paris was shot on a barricade, while trying to act as a peacemaker.

In the time of the Commune of 1871, priests and bishops were shot deliberately; others were butchered with horrible cruelty in a general massacre. There has been no popular disturbance of a serious kind,

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no insurrection where the clergy have not suffered cruelly from the violence of the mob. The Socialists and Communists are the avowed enemies of all religious belief, and of all men in any way connected with a recognized religious body. If any fresh Revolution were to occur under Socialist influences, the priests and bishops who now cry *Vive la République*, would in all probability be the first victims. They are looked upon as deserters and traitors; none of the leading Socialists believe in their sincerity, and all would cry at once, "Ye are spies."

And yet there is truly a strong democratic feeling among the French clergy of the present time. Under the "*Ancien régime*," the Throne and the Altar supported each other; the bishops and priests were principally gentlemen, sons of the great aristocratic families, and consequently educated to believe in the close alliance of "God and the King," a delusion which all the vices of Louis XV. had not dispelled. During the Revolution they gave proof that they were ready to die for their *faith*, and also for their sovereign. It would not be easy at the present day to find a priest who would be willing to hurt his little finger seriously for the sake of the Comte de Paris! So long as the Comte de Chambord lived, there was a question of religious propriety in the case, which enforced at least outward deference. But although the Comte de Paris is just as truly a descendant of St. Louis as was the legitimate Pretender himself, yet he openly avows and adopts the principles of the French Revolution, which remove all the sacred halo from the representative of Royalty. He is taken at his word, and the question of loyal duty is set aside—every one feeling free to choose the form of government that he likes best. And the majority of the clergy, being of the people and not gentlemen by birth, see no reason why they should be governed by gentlemen and according to aristocratic views.

The Bishop of Grenoble says: "Personally, I have no tie binding me to fallen dynasties. I come from the people, and I can allow myself to be led by the people, who now wish for the Republic. As a bishop, nothing induces me to prefer any monarchy. I consequently adhere to the Republic, honestly, and without any mental reservation."

Cardinal Lavigerie goes further, and claims from all Catholics their acceptance of the Republic as a matter of conscience, on pain of disobedience to the Pope. Monarchists reply that the Pope has not exacted adhesion to the Republic as a matter of obedience; he has simply declared that the Church is inimical to no particular form of government, and that when the Republic holds the place of "Cæsar," we must still render to Cæsar that which is Cæsar's. Hence, bitter controversy, which is much to be regretted. It is not the less true, however, that when fidelity to the Royal cause ceased to be considered as a religious duty by the decision of the Pope himself, there was a sigh of relief through all the land, and that the vast majority of the clergy has now declared Republican sympathies, while the leading Orleanists are thrown into a state of amazed consternation. Whether in the end the

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clergy will fare better for this sudden exhibition of democratic principles is at least very doubtful; but at all events the prospects of the Comte de Paris have diminished in proportion. His cause, unhappily, is one for which nobody cares, with the exception of a few personal friends, who are too conscientious and too gentlemanlike to do the ugly things which are necessary to get up a *coup d'état* at the present time. They might have accepted the benefit of those done by Boulanger, but they will not soil their own fingers.

Is capital punishment necessary? Many are the discussions on this painful subject between those who, though equally kind and good in their ordinary dealings, hold conflicting opinions on this point. It may be interesting to quote that expressed by one who by position is peculiarly fitted to judge the question—the Abbé Faure, chaplain of "La Roquette," where those under sentence of death are sent to await execution.

The life of a chaplain of "La Roquette" is so painful in its daily functions, that only deep religious feeling could inspire the fortitude required—any other motive must break down before the disgust which must be felt at the necessary and continual contact with the very refuse of humanity; creatures who would seem to be absolute brutes.

These the chaplain must visit; with these he must converse, showing sufficient friendly kindness to win their confidence. When the fatal day comes, after what is often too long and harrowing delay, raising the anxious hope of a reprieve, the wretched prisoner is awakened suddenly at four in the morning, to be informed that his petition for mercy has been rejected, and that the hour is come! The chaplain stands by, with friendly sympathy and encouraging words, follows him to the scaffold, and never leaves him till the last embrace given, the last friendly word of hope for Divine mercy whispered in his ear, just before he is fastened to the fatal plank. The kind heart of the priest is torn at the sight; the miserable creature about to atone for his crimes has been under his care—the lost sheep of the Good Shepherd, and he has loved him as such.

And yet the Abbé Faure says decidedly that, according to his experience, capital punishment is necessary. "If capital punishment did not exist, it would have to be invented."* It is the only restraint, in his opinion. Many natures would care nothing for the prospect of penal servitude, the fear of death alone is efficacious. If the scaffold were suppressed, crimes would increase tenfold. When asked whether he believed in the repentance of criminals, he replied decidedly in the affirmative. Out of eighteen prisoners whom he had followed to the scaffold, fourteen were repentant, and died with Christian faith. He added, that he never forced his presence upon them, nor his exhortations.

* "Si la peine de mort n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer."

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They nearly all ask for his visits, either by letter, or by a message transmitted by the head-jailor. He then sees them regularly twice a week (oftener if desirable), and they usually listen with respectful attention.

The Refuge established for assisting the poor, by giving them work to do, is now in full activity. At present the only employment open to all those who apply is the simple task of tying up faggots and bundles of wood, for lighting fires.

Each one is required to make up sixty faggots a day, in return for food and lodging; any work they can do beyond this quantity is paid for. The test is said to be infallible; half those who apply go away during the first morning of trial; those who remain are really willing to earn their bread by honest work. But very few have a regular trade of their own. They may usually remain in the house from ten to fifteen days. Since the month of March, 445 men have been received, who have generally found permanent work on leaving the Refuge. In particular cases they may be kept for five or six weeks, if it be thought desirable.

We can recommend as a very charming and unobjectionable collection of stories the last volume recently published of 'Mémoires des Autres,' by Jules Simon. Also, 'Le Fada,' par Zari.

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OUR LIBRARY LIST.

HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. By ERNEST RENAN. (*Chapman & Hall.*) M. Renan's third volume brings his history of the Israelites up to the Return from the Captivity, and he holds out hopes in the preface of speedily concluding his great work by a fourth volume, dealing with the five centuries preceding the Christian era. It would be difficult to overrate the learning, the labour and the zeal for historical truth which have gone to the making of this monumental work, and perhaps we are the more eager to pay this well-deserved tribute to one of the greatest of Biblical critics from the fact that we cannot altogether find ourselves in sympathy with his point of view. Granted M. Renan's primary proposition, that the history of Judah in the seventh and eighth centuries B.C., is the history of a strenuous attempt on the part of the prophetic party to convert the worship of the tribal Deity into the monotheism recognising no God but Jehovah, we can only admire the skill with which he analyses the Biblical records and makes them witness to his theory. Our only doubt has its source in that "miracle of faith and hope unparalleled in history"—we quote M. Renan—which led the remnant of the Jewish nation to return to their ancient home, and to restore their sacred buildings in preparation for a promised Messiah. It is a wonderful story from any point of view, and we are not sure that the problem is simplified by the conversion of the prophets into far-seeing politicians. This, however, is but an opinion, and until we have the complete work before us, it is difficult to decide upon the merits of M. Renan's philosophy of Biblical history.

LETTERS OF JOHN KEATS. By SIDNEY COLVIN. (*Macmillan & Co.*) This is the first complete, or almost complete, edition of the letters of one whose mastery over the music of words is almost as remarkable in prose as in poetry. With the sole exception of the love-letters addressed by the poet to Miss Fanny Brawne, Mr. Sidney Colvin has collected together all the known letters of Keats, and has given them to the world in a convenient and portable form, prefaced by an introduction, itself a model of just and discriminating criticism. Especially happy is his comparison of the young poet's prose style

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to the English of Shakespeare, for no reader of the letters can fail to be struck with the way in which the writer speaks the very language of the Elizabethan dramatist, quoting the plays so often that the quotations seem almost unconscious. But apart from their literary beauties these letters have a special value in the eyes of all who would seek to connect genius with such things as are "of good report." The self-revelation of the young poet may disclose weaknesses and the dark shadows of hereditary disease, but few men could tell so much and stand so high in the estimation of their hearers.

"THE RENAISSANCE OF MUSIC. By MORTON LATHOM. (*David Stott, London.*) In the preface to his book, Mr. Lathom says: "My apologia for these pages is that an attempt is made in them to show the intimate family relation between music and her elder sisters—a relationship always traceable and most evident at the period when they attained to years of discretion, and, passing from the traditions of a period of nurture, began to think and to act for themselves." If any apology were necessary for so interesting a book, Mr. Lathom has amply justified his position in his brief but masterly treatment of a subject which appeals alike to musicians and to that larger general public for whom the history of the Renaissance has a peculiar fascination. Recognizing in the revolt against formalism and convention, and in the return to nature and reality, the ruling principle of the new thought and learning, Mr. Lathom shows how these ideas worked more slowly, but no less surely, in the development of music than in the kindred arts of painting and sculpture. Corresponding to the feeling for colour in painting was the growth of harmony in music. Strangely enough, it was at Venice that both movements originated. Hitherto music had been in strict bondage to the conservative traditions of the Church, but with the Renaissance came an impetus towards something more akin to life and its many-sided picturesqueness. The dramatic instinct forced its way through a new channel, and the result was the opera and the oratorio. It is the history of this development —so important to the music of the future—that Mr. Lathom has traced for us with sympathetic insight and a thorough knowledge of his subject. Perhaps the most interesting chapter is the one dealing with Monteverde, in whose conception of the scope and possibilities of the musical drama Mr. Lathom finds great affinity with Wagner's ideas.

THE WITCH OF PRAGUE. By F. MARION CRAWFORD. (3 vols. *Macmillan & Co.*) Mr. Marion Crawford's novels are always interesting—for one reason because they rarely resemble one another, and the reader opens his volumes with curiosity to discover which of his numerous styles the Author will choose to adopt. His latest work, 'The Witch of Prague,' is a study in hypnotism and mesmeric influences.

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The heroine, Unorna, has the reputation of dabbling in the occult arts, because, although she has her beneficent impulses, she is a tool in the hands of an unscrupulous egotist, oddly termed Keyork Arabian, who exploits her mesmeric powers to his own advantage. Unfortunately, Unorna falls desperately in love with a somewhat mysterious personage who goes by the name of "The Wanderer," and in the self-surrender, to which she ultimately submits herself in order to compass his happiness, she spoils Keyork's selfish schemes. The atmosphere in which the story moves is charged with mystery and romance, and it need scarcely be said that so good a literary artist as Mr. Crawford knows how to sustain our interest in his shadowy though passionate characters. As a whole, however, it may be doubted whether 'The Witch of Prague,' owing to its fantastic plot, will rank among the best of its author's creations.

ELSA. By E. MACQUEEN GRAY. (*Methuen & Co.*) Mr. Gray's novel, though bound in one volume, is too long. This prefatory statement sums up and includes all that we have to say in adverse criticism of a book which is full of good things, and far beyond the average novel in cleverness, knowledge of life, and skilful delineation of character. The scene of the story is laid in Venice and in Munich. The pictures of cosmopolitan life are admirably life-like, and the touches of local colouring are vivid and picturesque. In the delineation of German character Mr. Gray is peculiarly happy, and, though there is too much of it, nothing in the book is better than the account of artist life in Munich. Had the book been shorter by a third, we should have been spared the weaker portion of it—the sensational account of the Italian villain, Francesco Savarni, the only puppet-like character in the book. His introduction into the story necessitates an element of improbability in the treatment of the other characters, which detracts somewhat from their reality, and consequently it is the earlier portions of the book that are the best and most life-like. The style throughout is lively and easy, and in spite of its length the story moves rapidly.

THE FOLKS O' CARGLEN. By ALEXANDER GORDON. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) Mr. Gordon himself modestly confesses that he has not the pen "even of a J. M. Barrie," and the softened reviewer will hasten to admit, that though his work suffers in comparison with the masters in Scottish lore, there is yet much to admire in "The Folks o' Carglen." Great powers of observation and a humorous knack of description are not yet so common that we can afford to look askance at their possessor, and we are glad to welcome Mr. Gordon's book as one more contribution to the fund of trustworthy anecdotes of Scottish folk and Scottish manners. Of these we prefer the story of the elder who, when the diffidence of Farmer Fraham obliged him to offer prayer, was

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moved to begin with "Maist mercifu' Father, Thou knowest the frailties of our *frame*——" But this is only one of many gems of northern humour, which our readers will do well to seek out for themselves.

THE STREAM OF PLEASURE. By JOSEPH AND ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) The *raison d'être* of this pretty little book is the power of making charming little pencil sketches possessed by, at any rate, one of its authors. The pictures of riverside scenery with which it abounds are charming, and the letterpress is about as good, perhaps rather better, than is usual in the case of these slight records of uneventful journeys. Most of us know the banks of silvery Thames, but none of us will feel that an idle hour spent over these delightful illustrations on a summer's afternoon when 1891 condescends to allow us one, will be altogether wasted. And prospective voyagers might do worse than make a careful study of Mr. Legge's practical hints.

FOOTSTEPS OF FATE. By LOUIS COUPERUS. (*William Heinemann.*) In bringing the work of this little known Dutch writer before the English public, the publisher of the International Library has done a great service to literature. There is a delicacy of handling, combined with a power of presenting strong situations with a vividness of detail never degenerating into over-elaboration, which is far to seek in the work of most English novelists. The characters are few, but most vigorously and subtly delineated, and the catlike heartlessness and persistence with which Bertie wrecks the lives of the two lovers to secure his own personal comfort, whilst all the time enjoying his moments of mental exaltation and displaying genuine self-devotion in the cause of friendship, make a picture as lifelike as it is revolting. We rather doubt the artistic perfection of the tragic close—not the tragedy, for that was inevitable, but the desperate form which it takes. Probably, however, no two readers will agree on that point, though as to the merits of the book as a whole there can be no question.

EDUCATION AND HEREDITY. By J. M. GUYAU. (*Walter Scott.*) Messrs. Greenstreet and Stout have prepared a translation of M. Guyau's admirable treatise on education for the "Contemporary Science Series." The French philosopher lays great stress upon the importance of suggestion in education, and reasoning upon the analogy of the phenomena of hypnotism, he holds that moral impulses or instincts can be both strengthened, and even artificially created, by means similar to those employed by the scientific hypnotist. Like all writers on educational matters, he has a tendency to overrate the power of the teacher, whilst underrating the force of what we may perhaps call

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by an old name, "Original sin;" but, on the other hand, his protest against the use of the doctrine of heredity to excuse every form of criminality as well as every failure in education on the part of parents and guardians, is both valuable and necessary. His views on school organization are sound; but we wonder what a Wykehamist or a Carthusian would have to say to the choice of Eton, Harrow, and Rugby as "the principal seats of secondary education?"

BEAR-HUNTING IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS. By H. W. SETON-KARR, F.R.G.S. (*Chapman & Hall.*)

WITH SACK AND STOCK IN ALASKA. By GEORGE BROKE. (*Longmans, Green & Co.*) Both these little books of travel deal with the same regions of the earth, but they are widely different in style and in literary merit. Mr. Seton-Karr is a traveller who has eyes to see, and an experienced writer capable of conveying his observations to his readers in a pleasant and readable form. Mr. Broke has travelled, but seems to have been more impressed with the details of the commissariat than with the marvels of nature. His party breakfast, lunch or dine once in every three pages, and the "diariness" of his writing makes us regret that even in deference to the wishes of his late friend he should have sought publication. Mr. Seton-Karr's book will be of unfailing interest to sportsmen; Mr. Broke's can hardly interest any living person but himself.

STORIES OF OLD AND NEW SPAIN. By THOMAS A. JANVIER. (*Osgood, McIlvaine & Co.*) There is rather an epidemic just now of collections of short stories, and it is not very many such productions which deserve even that strictly limited immortality which cloth boards confer upon magazine articles. We must make an exception in favour of some of these Mexican tales, which have a distinctive flavour, and a fulness of detail suggestive of the Southern luxuriance which they so faithfully reproduce. The writer has no lack of humour of the special American kind, to which Mr. Bret Harte has accustomed us, but he prefers to exercise his gift of pathos, and in all the stories the note of sadness predominates. For ourselves, we prefer "Saint Mary of the Angels," but on this point there will doubtless be much variety of opinion.

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MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.

OCTOBER, 1891.

SOME NEGLECTED POSSIBILITIES OF RURAL LIFE.

PERHAPS one of the most rapidly though silently approaching State questions of the future concerns the maintenance in the rural districts of the country of a sufficient population to form a healthy balance against the swollen masses of the towns. Of late years the development of agricultural machinery has bereft large numbers of country people of their former means of livelihood, driving them into the cities. Other factors also, the competition of wholesale manufacture and the like, have brought about a considerable narrowing of the means of rural subsistence, till in many quarters the prospect for those who remain in the villages becomes continually more and more discouraging. The causes of the late crofter troubles in the North, for instance, and the general decadence of small holdings, can be traced thus The introduction of coin currency in place of payment in kind reduced the Highland townships from their former position of independent communities supplying each its own entire needs, to the condition of mere wage-earning societies; while their distance from market, and the competition of steam and capital, have in many cases rendered their staple occupation scarcely enough to keep body and soul together. Formerly, when a crofter produced food directly for the consumption of his own family, his efforts were amply sufficient to secure fish enough and to grow all the corn and potatoes needed, while his wife spun the wool of his sheep into comfortable clothing for the household, and a few weeks' labour on the proprietor's estate could easily be spared by way of rent. But under the newer condition of affairs, when everything has to be bought at the store, the crofter's earnings as a fisherman, in competition with steam trawlers and the expen-

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sively fitted boats of fishing companies, are apt to prove all insufficient to produce the old result. It does not seem to have occurred to him to return to the self-contained independence of former days ; new local industries have not sprung up to supply the loss of the old ; and so too often the crofter has sunk into a condition of chronic indigence and has become a political difficulty. From the circumstances of the case no access of commercial prosperity can be expected to restore the *status quo ante*, and unless some means be found for revivifying the rural districts, the question of maintaining in the future a healthy supply of blood and muscle for the nation promises to become serious enough. In our haste of late years to turn the whole energies of the country into the channel of manufacture we have been apt to overlook the fact that the first essential of a nation's prosperity is its actual muscle and blood. We have forgotten that the backbone of a country consists of the physique of its peasantry, and so we have paid but scant attention to rural development, content apparently to let our farmers become manufacturers and our ploughmen the stokers of engines. Only sometimes of late people have begun to reflect on the fate which overtook former empires when they ceased to maintain a sufficient native peasantry upon the soil. Rome, it is remembered, did not fall until the people had given up the healthy occupations of rural life, and, crowded within city walls, had come to depend for bread upon the corn of Sicily and of Egypt.

Nature, of course, has a remedy of her own for the unhealthy tendency towards centralization in cities. The working of the antidote is to be seen in the history of Carthage and of Rome, and there is reason to believe that its action brought about the fall of the earlier empires of the East. When the fields and the mountains, themselves unpeopled, cease to supply a stream of fresh blood to the cities, the population of the latter, from natural causes, degenerates until it becomes emasculate and too weak to protect itself. At this point some crisis of war or fortune breaks up the whole unhealthy organism, and scatters the effete and congested population far and wide, to be regenerated through succeeding ages by the breath of the soil and the sea. This crisis in our own case may or may not be imminent. It is well, however, to be alive to possibilities. Foreign countries are rapidly developing for themselves the manufactures by which we have lately lived, and the exploiting of fresh colonies and new markets cannot go on for ever. Already our operatives occasionally find some difficulty in securing a livelihood, and the

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three hundred and odd thousand practically unemployed in the East-end of London form a reproach, if not indeed a menace, to orderly and humane government. When America no longer needs our cottons and carpets, and when Germany has ceased to require our engines and arms and ironwork, it behoves us, like the careful householder with trying times ahead, to pay some attention to home resources, and to study the minor as well as the major details by which the difficulty may be solved.

For the existing state of things in country and in town several remedies have been promulgated. Assisted emigration, compulsory allotment of land, the fixing of judicial rents by a Government Commission—all have had their advocates, and at least two of the methods are upon trial. None of these schemes, however, is free from grave objections. Emigration, it is said, exports the best blood and sinew of the country, and compulsory allotments and judicial rents are an interference with the working of economic laws. While promulgated with the best intentions, therefore, and out of sympathy with the hardships of so much modern life, these methods of relief, it would appear, are in danger of leading merely to other distresses. It would be matter of regret if, in avoiding Scylla, the ship should be steered into Charybdis. In helping the indigent it would be unfortunate if the method used did injury to the industrious.

Happily, in default of the already mentioned plans of relief for congestion of city and decay of rural population, another means which appears open to fewer objections and which bears promise of less doubtful results may be shown to present itself. Perhaps its chief commendation lies in the fact that it is commercial and not legislative, that its motive power is individual interest and not a parliamentary vote.

The most obvious and feasible method, at the present moment, of fostering a rural population by natural and just means, appears to be the discovery of new rural employments for the people.

Some eight or ten years ago there was started by Mrs. Jebb, in Shropshire, an organization entitled the "Home Arts and Industries Association," having for its laudable though unambitious object, the instruction of artizans' children and others in such simple arts as might both form a healthy amusement for leisure hours and assist the family income to some extent in case of necessity. This society has attained unlooked-for success, and with headquarters at the Royal Albert Hall, London, it has now branches in all parts of the kingdom. In the North the late

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Duchess of Sutherland was among the first to foresee the advantages which might accrue to the Highland communities from a revival of their ancient arts and handicrafts. Several years ago she exerted her influence to set a movement in this direction afoot among the glens of the Highlands, and the success of her efforts, seen in exhibition after exhibition at Inverness and in London, has culminated in the formation of the Scottish Home Industries Association under the presidency of H.R.H. the Marchioness of Lorne. Her Grace's example has been followed elsewhere, and the revival of ancient industries of many kinds in Ireland and Wales is already producing favourable results, while various efforts for the encouragement of lace-making and needlework have of late done much to popularise the productions of female hand-labour.

It is already beginning to be recognized by the ordinary consumer that many productions of handicraft possess an advantage over those of machinery which more than compensates for the slight difference in price. The shawls of Shetland, the tweeds woven in the hand-looms, and the hose knitted by patient Highland fingers, are found to possess qualities of comfort and durability far surpassing the wholesale productions of the steam factory; and those goods now only require an organized means of reaching the public in order to find a ready and satisfactory sale. Already the demand for hand-woven Highland tweeds has become so great that machinery and capital are hard at work producing colourable imitations, an effort in which they are not entirely without success. The tendency of machine production, however, remains always towards cheapness rather than towards perfection, and so long as the humble craftsmen of the North maintain a reputation for honest excellence of workmanship, they are not likely to be much hurt by the competition of steam. Nor by this is it intended to deprecate the use of machinery. Steam has its own advantages and its own unassailable province, and may very well be left to take care of itself.

Further, alongside of the popular recognition of the superior wearing power of many hand-made fabrics, there appears to be in the air another influence which promises to assist immensely the revival of certain handicrafts. Following the general spread of culture and artistic feeling, there has arisen a healthy distaste for the manufacture of particular classes of articles by machinery. The public is beginning to perceive that certain productions as

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turned out by the gross by modern automatic engines compare ignobly with the loving hand-work of Athens and of Florence, of Delhi and Pekin and Yokohama; and the fault is found to lie essentially in the method of our manufacture. Accordingly, against the *régime* of wholesale production in many departments it has already long been evident that the better sort of public taste is beginning to rebel, and to demand that its surroundings, even though they be less profuse, shall at least possess the distinctness of *character*, born of individual workmanship. The growing popular sentiment on the subject has Mr. William Morris for its apostle from the moral as well as the æsthetic point of view. In his paper on the "Revival of Handicraft" in the *Fortnightly* two years ago, besides exclaiming against the intrinsic decadence of workmanship brought about by machinery, he took occasion to lament the effect of machinery upon the workman. He complained with much justice that the institution of machinery has reduced labour to mere drudgery, the intelligent toil of the craftsman to the mechanical performance of the machine-tender; and he urged that only by a return to handicraft shall the craftsman be able to enjoy that fulness of life which comes from an interest in its work. In support of the argument of Mr. Morris's paper may be adduced the feeling which has made possible successive "Arts and Crafts" exhibitions in London, and at least one exhibition of "Decorative Handiwork" in Edinburgh. All this serves to show a significant tendency of popular opinion. Society is tired of many of the crude and characterless productions of crank and piston, and is eager to welcome work containing more evidence of human hand and brain in its manufacture. And although at present the practical working of the sentiment may be rather directed towards the decorative side of life—to hammered brass and hand-carved panels—it is not of a nature to stop there, but must extend itself in due course to the more ordinary requirements of existence. Such a movement of public taste implies the opening up of immense new fields of employment in which the rural craftsman, with his cheaper living and stronger individuality, ought to be able to compete upon advantageous terms with his brother of the town. It lies with the people themselves and their advisers to grasp the opportunity offered, and to address themselves to the supplying of the opening market.

In addition, however, to encouraging the ancient hand industries already known and practised in the rural districts, it should

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be the business of those interested in the prosperity and health of the country to discover and introduce further means of livelihood likely to thrive on home soil. In this direction hitherto statesmen and workmen alike have displayed singular inactivity. Sir Walter Raleigh, it is true, some three hundred years ago introduced potato cultivation, and another forgotten worthy brought over the art of draining fen lands; but upon consideration it will be found difficult to recall any fair number of crafts imported by natives of these isles, and it has been left to Flemish, Huguenot, and other political immigrants to enrich Britain from time to time with the practice of new trades. Yet a little enterprise in this direction might not only prove extremely profitable to its originator himself, but would entail far-reaching beneficent results throughout the country. The introduction of new industries to the Highland glens and Irish townships might certainly afford a happier outlet for restless energies than does the too common occupation of spreading political discontent.

To begin with, something might be done by the landlords. No doubt this class has its difficulties, difficulties which, as in most positions and professions, are not apparent to the outsider; and obviously it is as unjust to demand gratuitous concessions from the owners of the soil as it would be to demand gratuitous supplies from the dealers in provisions. In the present matter, however, nothing need be asked but what is in the best interests of the land-owners themselves. Were the proprietors in the North, for instance, to plant their moors and mountains with trees, they would be materially assisting their own family fortunes as well as furthering those of the peasantry. Many of these proprietors, with a keen eye to the near future, when the present sources of timber in America are likely to be exhausted, are already engaged in this enterprise—a few years ago a late Earl of Seafield planted no fewer than sixty million trees in the valley of the Spey—and the growing woods, besides affording employment to an army of foresters, are beginning to render habitable many tracts of country hitherto fit only for grouse and deer. Timber will grow where nothing else can, and in fifty years' time land originally worth only a few shillings per acre is capable of rearing a crop worth, after paying all rent and expenses, from seventy to a hundred pounds. M. Boppé, the French expert employed by the British Government to report upon the subject, declared that north of a line drawn from Perth to Greenock, six million acres of the waste lands of

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Scotland were suitable for the growth of valuable timber. The employment of labour entailed in the planting and forest work of even a moderate part of this acreage would be enough to relieve all the much-lamented congestion of population in the North; and, in face of the fact that this country continues to import timber to the value of £20,000,000 sterling per annum, there is little fear of the market being glutted by home production.

Besides the actual occupation afforded the people by the work of forestry, the shelter of the timber would in a few years permit of intervening lands being turned to profitable account. On these sheltered lands the culture, say, of fruit might become a matter of no little economic importance. By trustworthy experts Britain has been computed to import annually some eight million pounds' worth of fruit. Much of this, of course, is the production of the tropics and of warmer climates than ours; but it is estimated that something like a third of the quantity could without difficulty be produced at home. An idea of the possibilities of this business may be formed when it is found stated that Lord Sudeley's English fruit-farm of 500 acres in 1890 brought him a gross income of £10,000, although last year was a very poor one for the production of berries. The question may well be asked whether it might not be possible, under such altered circumstances as the planting of forests would bring about, to grow apples, currants and gooseberries, even on the now desolate moors of Scotland. The Moor of Rannoch lies further south than Aberdeenshire, yet the latter once was the most famous strawberry district in the kingdom.

Even under present conditions, however, many industries now unthought of might easily be turned to some account. Oyster culture, it is true, has not yet shown itself successful in the Highland lochs. The data there, however, can hardly be considered conclusive, the few isolated experiments in the cultivation of the bivalve, like that of Mr. Anderson Smith in Loch Creran, never having had a fair chance. The fact that oysters are frequently to be found native in these northern waters offers strong ground for belief that they might be profitably grown. An example of what might be realized from the development of such an enterprise is to be found in the success which has attended the experiment of oyster-culture in the basin of Arcachon in France. Little more than twenty years ago Mr. H. S. Johnston, an English merchant in Bordeaux, obtained for this purpose from the French Government a lease

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of large sections of the basin; and already the cultivation of the oyster there affords employment to several thousand men and women, and the annual sale of bivalves from the beds is over 200,000,000.

Another very feasible source of income for rural communities might be found in the cultivation of the rabbit, and the breeding of pigeons suitable for market. The former of these, it may be said, implies the control of more land, while one of the best-advertised complaints of crofters and rural labourers is that they have not soil enough. But any stretch of waste land by a loch shore suffices for a rabbit-warren, and proprietors in most cases are willing enough to lease out additional land wherever available, so long as they are assured that the ground is to be profitably used and fairly paid for. Rabbits and pigeons, it is well known, are among the most prolific of animals; and their use as articles of diet remains capable of wide development. A shrewd baronet in the North a few years ago, to the writer's own knowledge, restored the fortunes of his family estate almost entirely by the judicious manipulation of this resource.

Much has been said from time to time as to the possibilities of fowl-rearing and egg-production. Regarding these, it may be enough to note that in 1890 the eggs imported into Great Britain represented a sum of over three millions sterling. When Russia, Italy, and even Australia are furnishing us with such supplies, the home production should easily be profitable, even in remote districts of the country. The provision carts which everywhere nowadays penetrate our rural districts as a rule are willing enough carriers of these commodities.

Among crops especially suitable for the marshy bottoms of many of the northern glens, but whose cultivation seems within the last forty or fifty years to have been altogether neglected, is that of flax. The growing of this plant used to be common enough in Scotland, and as it remains one of the staple industries of Ireland at the present hour, it seems but fair to believe that it might be re-introduced with advantage in the United Kingdom. Some few years ago a firm of Dundee manufacturers interested in the subject offered to furnish sufficient seed, and purchase, at a rate remunerative to the growers, the straw of a thousand acres of flax; and it was understood at the time that their offer had been largely taken up. It is thus apparent that no real obstacle to the growing of

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the crop in this country exists. A novel enterprise, however, takes time to make way. The objection to flax-growing formerly, and one of the reasons for abandoning its cultivation, was that it impoverished good soil. The necessity for rotation of crops, however, was not then so well understood as now, and it ought to be remembered that, like the alder tree, flax will flourish on ground the marshiness of which precludes the growing of other plants, and that the otherwise valueless edges of bog and fen are exactly the place for its culture.

Besides these prominent objects of attention there are many minor means of livelihood which might profitably engage the hands of individual cottagers. It is sufficient to indicate a few of these; for but slight enquiry on the part of those interested will reveal others in astonishing number.

Along the sea-shore wealth lies scattered literally for the picking up. Not to speak of artistic materials in the shape of sea-flora, rock-crystal, and mother-o'-pearl, there is endless resource in the seaweed and shellfish covering the beach everywhere, from the "Irish moss" which, dried and bleached, forms a common delicacy for invalids, to the horse-mussels and rougher sea-tangle on which, when boiled, many a porker for market and many a milk-giving goat might be fed. Of saleable products, some effort might be made to cultivate salad plants like the common water-cress. London annually consumes £20,000 worth of this insignificant weed. A better home for its kind could not be found than many of the marshes and burnsides of Scotland, where in fact, all unheeded, it already is common enough. Again, unthinking people might be surprised to discover the revenue possible from the woodland harvest of hazel-nuts and bramble-berries, if only a little attention were paid to the gathering of it in; and it may well be matter of marvel, when so much is paid away every year for preserves made from such fruits as the West Indian guava, that hundreds of tons of hips and haws, rowans and sloes, are annually left to drop unused from our native hedges. These wild berries, properly treated, make delicious jellies, and their commonness seems the only cause hitherto for their almost total neglect. Amid a score of like possibilities one is tempted to wonder that no cocoa or kola-like beverage has yet been manufactured out of the abundant beech-nut harvest of the British woods. A resource of this sort seems surely no less promising than the dried coffee-bean of Ceylon, or the herbage of the Indian shrub which a cunning

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manipulation converts into tea. Again, with miles of forest blossom and leagues of rich moor heather at hand in many districts, the profits of bee-keeping might be taken advantage of much more largely; and it might well be tried whether such productions as the mead of our ancestors might not be re-introduced and create a demand for itself in the market. Not a little might be done in the distilling of elder-flower water and other perfumes once fashionable enough in the country. All that is wanted to make such productions popular and profitable is tasteful preparation for market. Let the perfumes and jellies and honey be but as neatly prepared and packed as are the familiar Eau-de-Cologne, Indian preserves, and Californian bee-products, and there need be little fear of their finding a ready sale. Bouquets of the sweet-scented bog-myrtle should be no less saleable than the bunches of lavender vended so freely in the London streets. And few will doubt that ripe hazel-nuts, if sent to market in such easily handled and attractive form as that in which mushrooms are offered, would find themselves in ample demand.

Among the non-edible productions which might be suggested as likely to repay the time spent in acquiring proficiency of manufacture, appear articles like the baskets and tables of woven green rushes which have of late found so ready sale in many quarters, and the carved toys and ornaments of all sorts which are at present imported in large quantities from the Continent. Many productions—those bordering upon the arts, for instance, such as wood-carving—are, it should be remembered, impossible to machinery, and are therefore in no fear of being undersold by that competitor; and picture-frames, spinning-wheels, fishing-rods and pieces of rustic furniture, indicate possibilities of remunerative employment for more than the mere leisure hours of a rural population. It is superlative to multiply instances. The suggestion meanwhile is enough for the purpose.

In detail these resources and their like may appear slender means to bring forward for the support of a population; but, taken together, the profits of such resources are capable of being made something very considerable indeed. Every one now knows, or for his own interest ought to know, how often apparently inconsiderable trifles have in thoughtful hands been turned to profitable account. In many an industry besides the manufacture of coal-gas it is notorious that the by-products have come to form the chief source of income. To prove what can be

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done with petty resources, it is enough to remember the handsome income made by at least one firm of manufacturers through converting such an apparently contemptible detail as the orange-peel annually thrown away in Paris into a certain kind of coffee. For the unconsidered trifle of toys alone Britain pays away every year considerably over £600,000, and it requires but little reflection to perceive how large a difference to the comfort and employment of our working classes might be made by the conservation of a few such items of expenditure within the bounds of our own country. Many of the peasant families about Leipsic and Nuremberg, according to Mrs. Horne Payne, can earn in the otherwise idle winter time from twelve to eighteen shillings a week by the making of toys alone.

By attention to minor economies such as these the greater part of the honest poverty and congestion of population in this country might, there is ample room to hope, be relieved. The chief recommendation, moreover, of the particular resources which it is the effort of the present paper to point out is that they must of necessity be cultivated in rural districts. In this respect, besides offering fair promise of material livelihood, they hold out a corrective to several unhealthy modern tendencies. The political advantage of fostering such industries becomes apparent when it is remembered that every additional peasant maintained on the soil means a physical gain to the country.

As for the method of turning new resources of the sort indicated above to practical account, prudence would urge that it be left to individual enterprise. Government interference and subsidy to any branch of industry must always imply some amount of unfairness to the free competitor, besides bringing about economically an artificial and unhealthy state of things. Among kindred schemes, the subsidizing of training farms for the behoof of the unemployed has been advocated. But were parochial authorities to undertake any such enterprise it is to be feared that their action might have the same ruinous effect upon independent farming as workhouse labour has already had upon our brush and basket-making industries. Government interference in this as in most other economic matters is likely to create evils as great as those which it cures.

Philanthropy, on the other hand, is both limited in its capabilities and apt to be mistaken in its methods.

The remaining and what would seem the legitimate and natural course would appear to be to point out to capitalists and landowners the profit which would accrue to themselves from a

judicious encouragement of rural arts and crafts. Highland proprietors may be induced to acquaint themselves with the profits of planting their moors with timber and of fostering on their estates such peasant arts as suit the climate and are not likely to be killed by the competition of machinery. And capitalists may be invited to consider how the thousands of acres of land lying idle throughout the country might afford profitable scope for the colonizing efforts of limited liability companies and co-operative societies without number. It seems strange that while in Australia and the Western States of America land companies and irrigation companies carry on the work of settlement on an immense scale, in the far more favourable conditions of our own country almost nothing of the kind is attempted. Land enough is always in the market in England, and, considering the relative proximity to consuming centres, is no more costly than in the United States. Were a limited association to buy up one of the estates for sale, build suitable cottages on it, instruct its selected colonists in the methods and possibilities of orchard-culture and other neglected industries, and finally help them, as the American companies do, to a fair market, it could hardly fail before long to find its investment profitable from the rent-receiving point of view. As long as so many million pounds sterling are every year spent abroad upon articles—timber, fruit, honey, butter, eggs, &c.—which might equally well be produced at home, so long surely there remains room enough for adventure in this direction.

By such means as these might the congestion of our City East-ends be gradually and naturally relieved; while the country at large would be enriched, financially by the immense saving effected on imports, and physically by the healthy peasant population which would be reared upon the soil.

The present paper has purposely dealt with the possibility of instituting such reforms upon a large scale. It may also, however, serve to suggest to the individual clerk or tradesman that when competition renders it no longer possible for him to subsist by the profits of traffic in town, he may still retire for support upon the neglected economies and industries of the sea-shore and the country side—may still, as City operatives known to the writer have done, rear his brown brood upon the fish his own line catches, and the soil his own spade turns, without reference to the fluctuations of the labour market, or the current value of gold.

GEORGE EYRE-TODD.

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ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS.

AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY."

CHAPTER III.

ONE day, a week after Francis Earle's arrival, he and Molly were again alone together in the garden-parlour. Molly lay idle on her couch, and Francis was making a careful map, from sundry rough jottings, of the district round him in America. His life there was exceedingly busy, as his military and organizing talents had early made him a central figure in the distant colony to which he had gone, peopled as it was by all classes except the wealthy and educated, and lying on the edge of the Indian-haunted wilderness. This active and also solitary life had made him considerably more silent than in old days, and less sarcastic: for sarcasm is a weapon that those who have to govern others learn to keep mostly in the sheath. The map did not advance quickly. At length he ceased from the pretence of it, and sat completely idle, biting his pen and looking out of the window. Both he and Molly were silent, but probably their thoughts were moving in the same direction, for Swift had arrived that day with a packet of manuscript, and was now closeted with Esther in the book-room. Presently Francis rose and stood leaning on the mantel-piece.

"Molly," he said abruptly, "has this," and he made a gesture with his head in the direction of the book-room, "has this been going on the same all the time?"

"Yes, Frank, all the time," she answered sombrely, and their eyes met.

"Good God," he said, "'tis incredible! Ten years ago I thought it could not continue much longer. Ten years! After all that time I return, and find here precisely the same—no, not the same condition of affairs. They were doubtful, they were singular then, but now the lapse of time has made them intolerable. 'Tis very strange, Moll; so strange it appears to me like

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a dream. I am ready to pinch myself, in order to wake up a foolish discontented boy in St. James' Street."

"But, Frank," she asked, with a sudden alteration of tone, "are we not very censorious? I sometimes say to myself that sickness has made me too fretful and fanciful. Perhaps I am grown an old maid and object without reason to this friendship of my sister's. Perhaps there is no harm in it."

"No harm in it? Molly, are you mad?"

"Why, what do you think of it, Frank? Tell me truthfully —How does it seem to you, coming back to us after all this while?"

He writhed a few moments in silence, then suddenly turning his back on her and fixing his eyes on the fire he spoke.

"I cannot answer you—I will not. Only I beg you'll not speak as though there were a doubt in either of our minds, or in that damned scoundrel's either, that she loves him with an absorbing passion."

"Yes," she cried, starting up with animation. "And there was a time too when he loved her, I am sure of it, and yet he would not marry her. Now he never will. There's some mystery about him, Frank; 'tis the general belief, and 'tis my belief, that he is already married. What will become of her when I am gone? To be thus held off and on drives her into a kind of frenzy, yet should he wholly cast her off, and I be no more, she would—— I dare not think what she might do. Promise me you'll make her clear up this business; save her, Frank, when I am dead. She's young and strong and may live well and happy yet, if only some one will save her. I——," and her voice fell almost to a whisper, "I am not strong enough."

Francis pushed her gently back on to her pillows.

"Oh, you may trust me to do what I can," he answered shortly. "Pray now, Molly, do not be agitated; 'tis the worst thing in the world for one in your case. Where are your drops? I'm sure 'tis time you took 'em, and Essie has forgotten. Here—I'll give 'em you. Essie used not to forget such things," he added, as he measured out the medicine

"You won't turn away from her, Frank?" whispered Molly, looking up with an anxious fold in her brow, as she took the glass from his hand.

"No, of course not," he replied, with a pain that sounded like impatience; then sitting down near her, he continued more gently—"Who should I turn to? You and Essie and his

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Lordship are the only friends I have left in England, and out there are honest folks in plenty, but all rough, unlearned men. I wrote you of the Scotchman the Indians killed. That was the only friend I've made these ten years, Moll."

"Poor Frank! You seem very lonely."

"Lord! I don't say that to complain. I've plenty to busy me without repining, and am glad enough not to be a beggarly parson or usher, as I was once like to have been. What I would say is that, gratitude apart, I were less than human did I not value you and Essie."

Had he told Molly that he truly loved her sister, that all his hopes of private happiness, apart from the satisfaction he had in his busy, adventurous life, hung upon the possibility of Essie's consenting to share that life with him—had he told Molly this, it would have greatly lightened the load of anxiety upon her mind, in leaving her sister without the shelter and support of her own love. But an incurable habit of reticence in matters of feeling prevented his doing so.

"I never doubted your friendship, Frank," returned Molly. "You show it by risking your neck here on our account."

"Pooh, Moll! I do nothing of the sort."

"Well, you'll let me believe so, I hope, if 'twill make me easier in leaving Essie to your care."

Presently Esther came in, transformed from the hollow-eyed woman of yesterday to a young, blooming, handsome creature. Swift followed close on her, he also looking bright and well-pleased. The passion and reproach that burst forth in her letters to him never found distinct expression in his presence, partly because the awe of it controlled her, partly because she was happy when he was there. Consequently, though he might increasingly avoid her company, once in it, the old attraction re-asserted itself. They had both had a pleasant afternoon. She had sat on her favourite stool close to his elbow-chair, and they had talked about old times; Kensington, Windsor, St. James' Street, and the rest—old times in England, for he did not love to talk of those first two years of her stay in Ireland, to which he perhaps alluded when in his plan for the second part of 'Cadenus and Vanessa,' he put down "Two hundred chapters of madness." Then they had read over a new voyage of Gulliver's, superintended some reforms in the kingdom of Brobdignag, and deplored the miseries of the kingdom of Ireland—that poor, oppressed Ireland, to which, as Esther told

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him, he had been sent by a discerning and beneficent Providence. Esther came in carrying a plate.

"Here is an orange ready dressed for Molly," she said, "and if Frank is good, she will give him a bit."

"He had better be merely tyrannical, and exact it as tribute," said Swift. "This is how I have obtained the best bits from fine ladies for the last twenty years."

"Molly, your drops!" cried Esther.

"Don't trouble yourself, Hess," returned Frank, drily. "I gave her them. You were wont to keep a memory once."

Essie blushed.

"I see you are determined to declare yourself to the Dean," she said. "I was just telling him your tongue was so disguised your best friends did not know it again."

Frank had darted into a corner for a lacquer table that usually stood at Molly's side, and made no answer.

"I wish, sir," said Swift, with stately politeness, "you had returned to us from the East instead of from the West; for in that case you could tell these ladies with all the authority I lack that theirs is the best coffee and conversation in the world. You might persuade 'em not to hide such fine things in such a hole as Cellbridge. But I imagine after an American wilderness you find this a complete Paradise."

"Oh, complete—even to the serpent," returned Francis, and bit his lip; for he was annoyed to find himself suddenly transformed once more to the insignificant youth of ten years ago, avenging his own insignificance by unobserved repartees. He would have thought that impossible, but there he was, the old Francis, and there was the old Great Man, more superb, more invulnerable than ever.

Francis did not remain very long at Cellbridge. The Vanhomrighs had hastily got rid of Anna Stone, but both they and Francis had plenty of other cousins in Dublin, and it was at once difficult to explain and not to explain his presence and his identity. Besides he had to visit Lord Peterborough and give an account of his American stewardship. He was, however, to return. Molly had one of her wonderful rallies before he went, and it was owing to this, as well as to their common dislike of farewell-scenes, that she and Francis were able to pretend he would find her still there on his return. Then in a few days she was worse than ever. Esther was compelled to acknow-

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ledge that Molly must die, and at moments as she supported the wasted little frame, herself tortured to the height of endurance by every pang it suffered, she could have welcomed any end to the struggle. Then again succeeded to that a desperate determination. Molly should not die yet, should not be allowed to let go her hold of life so soon. There is so much in having the will to live.

It was several nights since Esther had gone to bed, and she had quite left off being sleepy. All the house was quiet, for it was long after midnight. She sat idle on a stool by the fire, below the small shaded night-lamp, which did not give enough light to read by. From without came the ceaseless rushing of the Liffey, and from time to time the noise of a gusty wind that tossed the trees and passed seawards. Either because her eyes were accustomed to the twilight, or owing to the overstrained sensitive state of her nerves, Molly's profile, lying against the pillow, was as distinctly visible to her as though it had been in the fullest light. She saw but too clearly the sharpened nose, the lips straightened by the habitual endurance of pain, the hollow cheek and the hair swept off from her face and lying above her on the pillow, thin and streaked with premature grey. She closed her eyes and tried to conjure up the face of the old Molly, the Molly of St. James' Street; but she could not do so with any definiteness. She could remember dresses she had worn, could remember vaguely the prettiness and brightness of her appearance, but the lineaments of the dear face that had once been always under her eyes, were gone past recall. Only she knew they had been other than those she saw before her. Then with a sharp pang it came to her that in a very short time, most likely even by that day next week, this same, yet other, dear face would be lying in the dark, solitary grave, hidden from her for ever, and she would be here, sitting perhaps just where she sat now, and trying impotently to recall it. She rose, and slipping off her shoes, lest the heels should make a noise, went and leaned on the footboard of the bed, looking intently at her sister, and trying to impress the worn sleeping face upon her memory. In a few minutes Molly suddenly opened her eyes and met Esther's.

"Yes," she said, as though she were answering to a call. Esther held up her finger for "Hush," and would have stolen back to her place, but Molly in a stronger voice than she had lately found, bade her stay where she was. It was now Molly

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whose eyes were fixed upon Esther, while she leaned there at the bed's foot, with her chin on her hand, sometimes glancing at her sister, oftener staring at the patterns on the embroidered coverlet and listening to the sound of the river and the fitful wind outside. Was it only—it must be only a fancy that there was something of sternness and reproach in those wide bright eyes opposite her. She spoke to dispel it.

"Go to sleep, Molly."

"Ah, I wish I could," returned Molly; "but I can't. How can I sleep when you won't promise me anything?"

"What should I promise?" asked Esther, starting and turning pale.

"You know very well, but you won't do it," replied Molly and closed her eyes with a weary pettish sigh.

Esther leaned forward, clasping her hands:

"What, my darling?" she asked in a eager whisper; Molly opened her eyes again.

"Find out whether he's married," she asked in a clear, almost loud voice.

"I will, I will; I promise you," cried Esther impulsively.

Molly smiled. She knew she could rely upon her sister's word. When the promise had escaped Esther's lips, she realized to what she had committed herself, but she dared not withdraw it. She almost staggered to a chair by the bedside and buried her face in the coverlet. Her crisp, curly hair, blond still, if a shade darker than of old, was loosened for the night and fell in a thick cloud about her neck. Molly plunged her hand into it.

"I love to feel real hair sometimes. I believe, Hess, you have a finer head of it than ever. As for mine, 'tis a handful of dry hay, only as grey as a badger's."

"'Tis no matter," replied Essie, lifting her head. "Sure your friends do not regard any losses to your head, so long as its wits are not lost."

"But they are," returned Molly; "and that is no matter either."

"Pray do not talk, Molly. You promised to sleep."

"I did nothing of the sort, miss, but I will sleep presently, when I have talked a bit."

"The Doctor forbade you to talk, Molly."

Molly smiled her old mocking smile.

"Why, my dear? Because I should die the sooner? Did ever such a trifle as the fear of death make a woman hold her

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tongue? I mean not to disgrace my sex but to die talking, in spite of all the doctors in the universe."

"Hush! I shall not answer."

"Do, my dear; you must. In sober truth, Essie, what is the use of being alive, if I may not communicate with you? 'Tis a foolish price at which to buy a few more hours of breath."

Esther made no reply, not because she was resolved to be silent, but because she seemed to have nothing to say. One fact had possession of her mind, insistently pressing for a recognition of its reality, which she was but slowly yielding it. The fact that very soon Molly would be gone, and she would never have her again. A very young person would not have realized it at all, but Esther had lived long enough to know the meaning of the word "never." She shed no tears, there would be plenty of time for tears afterwards; she sat looking at Molly and holding her hand.

"How I hate the Liffey!" cried Molly, after a pause. "When I was a little girl and lay awake here at night, I used to like to hear it; it seemed like somebody there. I used to like to think of it, rushing along to Dublin all night, just the same as in the day. Now, I protest I sometimes fancy 'tis the death of me. If I get through this bout, Hess, will you come to the Bath next spring? I believe you have used up all your excuses for not coming; besides, husbanding my fortune so well as we do, I may go in spite of your teeth."

"I will go anywhere you choose, Moll, from America to Constantinople."

"Obliging girl!" returned Molly with a bright smile. "Ah, you don't perceive I am better, but I am. Yet I won't be malicious, but will take you no further than London."

"O, not London!" cried Esther, forgetting for a moment that all this was but fancy.

"Yes, certainly London! Dear, charming London! 'Tis mighty perverse of you to have such a spite against it. Sure if we spent some unpleasant months there, we spent many more pleasant ones. O Hess, I should love to walk in the Mall again, some fine spring day about noon! 'Twould be like old times, yet so diverting to see the new modes and the reigning toasts, that was brats in the nursery when you and I was in their shoes. Sure I trust their gallants have found some new oaths, for the old ones was very stale even in our day."

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"They were good enough to break, and no doubt serve the same purpose well enough still."

"I dare say we should look pretty odd, in our Dublin modes, if we were to walk among 'em. Frank must be in London by now, but *he* will observe nothing. If I were not so much better to-night, I should ask you to be sure and tell Frank what a regard I have for him. But I shall get over this and see him again, and wish to tell him myself, and—certainly not be able to do so. I believe some malicious fairy stood godmother to him, and ordained that he should be full of amiable feelings and forbidden to express them, or to listen to any such feelings expressed to him by others. I find the spell work powerfully against me when I would show him kindness."

"It can be of no consequence, Molly, since he is perfectly sensible of our sincere friendship for him, as we of his for us. You and I, my dear, don't often protest our attachment to each other."

"No, Essie, no, my dear love; not often—only sometimes. To-night for instance. Come and lie on the bed here by me, and kiss me good-night."

The bed was a large one in which they were accustomed to sleep together, and Esther did as she was bidden to do. Molly put a thin little arm round her sister's neck.

"I have always loved you, every minute of my life, Hess," she said. "Good-night"

They kissed each other, and when Molly was asleep, Esther too fell suddenly into the deep slumber of exhaustion.

It was morning before old Ann came in to relieve Esther's watch. In the grey early light she saw the two sisters lying on the bed, and at first thought them both asleep; but when she looked nearer she saw that Molly was dead.

Chapter IV.

Condolences and congratulations are both, for obvious reasons, apt to fall short of the mark or to overshoot it. Many kind-hearted people came and sat round Miss Vanhomrigh's parlour, clothed in their decent black, and tried not to appreciate too keenly the excellence of her cake and wine, while they expressed their sincere sorrow at her bereavement. But in great loves, as in great thoughts or deeds, men and women must usually accept their solitude. It is only a minority who are capable of such, and of these again only a minority light on the individuals that

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have power to sound the depths of their emotions. Had Molly been Ginckel in female form, though in that form his follies could never have risen to the height of crimes, yet it is certain that the loss sustained by Miss Vanhomrigh could have been readily appraised by every cousin in Dublin. As it was, her proud and solitary spirit, rendered solitary partly by the "long disease" of another and less benignant love, shrunk morbidly from the kind, if superficial sympathy shown by her circle of acquaintances. There was one, only one, among them who knew just how and why she sorrowed. It was no selfish imprudence that brought Swift to Cellbridge oftener than usual that summer. He who was always prompt to succour and comfort the afflicted, wherever he found them, could not have turned his back upon the grief of his "little Hesskin;" especially since it was a grief in which he claimed a share. Moll had been in his eyes "a girl of infinite value," as he had said in that quick note with which he had answered the announcement of her death, saying no more than that, except that he could give no comfort to Essie, for he himself wanted comfort. This partial renewal of the old companionship would have been pure happiness to Swift, had he not been more alive to its danger than before. In the course of the journeys which he took in July and August, the long lonely rides and the many wet days in-doors, he thought much and anxiously of Missessy. He had not been many days back in Dublin before he rode over to Cellbridge, but instead of turning to the left when he had crossed the bridge over the Liffey, he turned to the right and trotted up the village-street, towards the gates of the big brand-new house in which the Conollys were just installing themselves. He found Mrs. Conolly in her great pillared hall, washing her most cherished pieces of china before putting them into a glass cupboard, while a young man in shirt-sleeves sat on the top of a ladder, polishing a bit of old armour which was to be hung upon the wall. Mrs. Conolly was enjoying all the delights of thoroughly arranging her house, even to that of being tired—which was quite an experience to her—and welcomed her visitor with her usual stately geniality, untempered by the least feeling that he was inopportune.

"I would not, sir, be so superfluous as to present to you my guest, Mr. Mordaunt," she said, "but that you can scarcely have expected to meet him here—or there," glancing up the ladder with a smile.

"Mordaunt?" repeated Swift, puzzled for a moment; then—

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"O, ay, to be sure," and he bowed to the former Mr. Earle, who returning the bow somewhat awkwardly from his perch made haste to descend.

"I have had the honour to know another Mordaunt these dozen years, sir," continued Swift, "and was never yet surprised to see him anywhere, except where I might have naturally expected to see him. You resemble him, Mr. Mordaunt. But in this case I understood from Miss Vanhomrigh that Mrs. Conolly had hospitably received you."

"Ay, and so have received something better than an angel unawares—a handy man," said Mrs. Conolly. "If the compliment were great enough, I would say Mr. Mordaunt was the handiest man in Dublin."

Francis, who was now in his coat, made Madam Conolly a low bow; for at Lord Peterborough's he had been at some pains to rub the rust of the Plantations off his manners.

"Madam," he replied, "I may earn my salt, but can never do enough to earn your most obliging hospitality. If it had been offered for my own sake, I trust I should not have had the conscience to accept of it."

He was thinking to himself; "So here is the cause of Essie's determination not to stay dinner."

"Miss Vanhomrigh has but just left us. I wonder you did not meet her," said Mrs. Conolly addressing the Dean.

"I love to muse when I ride, and may have passed without observing her," he answered.

This assumption of indifference was perhaps mere diplomacy on Swift's part, but it irritated Francis just sufficiently to make him carry out at once a resolution he had formed before returning to Ireland.

"What, Mr. Dean, in the street of Cellbridge?" he asked with an ironic smile. "Why, at this time of day you can't but observe a mongrel cur should it chance to walk there. Miss Vanhomrigh must be still in the park. Let us go find her, sir, for I believe we can do nothing so civil to Mrs. Conolly as to rid her of our company."

Mrs. Conolly made a faint attempt to detain them, but seeing that for some reason she did not understand, Mr. Mordaunt wished to be alone with the Dean, she let them go, with an admonition to be back for dinner. Swift's first quick impulse was one of revolt against the kind of force which this young man was daring to put on his movements, but he quickly

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conquered it. He asked himself whether he was or was not truly solicitous for Missessy's welfare, and willing also to share with another his own difficult unauthorized responsibility for her. As he silently descended the steps from the front door he took off his hat, as though to cool his brow, heated with riding; but in fact he was breathing a short habitual prayer, that he might be enabled to govern his fierce and haughty temper, and conduct himself as a Christian man. It was the more necessary because he was conscious of something unfriendly, resistant to his power in Essie's cousin; "little Master," as he was used to call him.

"Well, sir?" he said, replacing his hat, "I presume you have somewhat to say to me."

"I have," returned Francis slowly, combating an inclination to be afraid. "Will you walk towards the river, sir?"

"Wherever you please, young gentleman."

So they paced side by side. Before them sparkled a curve of the Liffey, its border of burdocks and rushes showing green against the yellow August meadows beyond, where the cattle lay chewing the cud in the broad sunshine. Behind rose the blue broken ridge of the Dublin mountains.

"You can doubtless guess, sir," said Francis after a pause, "the reasons that have prevented my visiting Cellbridge earlier in the year."

"I imagine you, Mr. Mordaunt, to be of necessity very much governed by Lord Peterborough's wishes. Besides, you have very just reasons for avoiding the eyes of your kinsmen in Dublin."

"You are right, Mr. Dean; yet those were not altogether my reasons for staying away till Mrs. Conolly was able, as she was before very obligingly willing, to receive me."

"No?" returned Swift, seating himself on the stump of a large felled tree, whilst Francis leaned against the bole.

"I earnestly desired to come to my Cousin Vanhomrigh's from the moment I found her to be left alone, sir, but in her solitary condition, we feared my presence in her house would give rise to scandal."

"So it would, sir, so it would."

"Yet if I am not her nearest male relation, I am the one on whom she naturally most depends, and who have the best right to take on me the office of a brother."

"A man of sense, sir, will perceive the absurdity of your situation, but men of sense are so few 'tis useless to consider 'em, I counsel you to remain with Mrs. Conolly."

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"You mistake my meaning, Mr. Dean," replied Francis with a shade of impatience. "'Tis one more personal to yourself. I would say, that I hold myself excused from impertinence in asking you, sir, to do your best endeavours to persuade my cousin not to continue in this solitary condition."

"I have several times entreated her to take a female cousin to live with her," returned Swift, also somewhat impatiently.

"Impossible!" ejaculated Francis, with heartfelt sincerity, for he was better acquainted with the family than was Swift. "No, she must quit this place."

"She must quit this island," cried Swift; "I have told her so. Yet whither shall she go?"

"To her Cousin Purvis at Twickenham."

"What? To a bed-ridden old woman, most like in her dotage?" asked the Dean with a grimace. "Sure poor Miss Essie has had her fill of nurse-tending."

"You have the means to make her choose it, sir—at least to influence her choice," Francis corrected himself hastily.

"How so, young gentleman?"

"By solemnly declaring to her on your word of honour, Mr. Dean, that this is the last visit she shall receive from you while she continues in this place." It was spoken significantly, and Swift gave an exclamation of anger, which he however instantly repressed, and in a few minutes spoke with cold stubbornness. For he was not going to be hurried into resolutions by this jackanapes.

"You would have me take singular and discourteous means to persuade Miss Vanhomrigh to a life very disgusting to a young woman. No, sir, I cannot promise you to do that."

"But if the alternative were marriage, what would you do?" questioned Francis, with a kind of reluctant deliberateness. It was detestably like asking his wife at the hands of a rival, but he endeavoured to console himself by the consciousness that his real object was to force an explanation between Swift and Esther.

"That, Mr. Mordaunt, is a question which I have already had before me," returned the Dean gravely. "There are few persons I should counsel to marry, but taking into consideration Miss Vanhomrigh's solitary condition and her fortune, I believe it would be for her happiness to marry a man she could esteem and reasonably like."

"I may trust you to counsel her in that sense, sir?"

"You may, sir."

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"And yet, Mr. Dean," Francis broke out with irrepressible bitterness, "it is certain such a man would scarcely think St. George's Channel a sufficient barrier between you and his wife."

Swift flushed haughtily and for a moment lifted his awful look to his opponent's frowning face; then remembering his resolution, he spoke more gently than before.

"I forgive your reflections on me, sir, for you are still young, and the young are often censorious—they are also sometimes mistaken. At all events the gentleman to whom I would point is my very particular friend and hath already asked my good offices in the matter. I have not moved in it till now, as I thought it indecent to speak of marrying and giving in marriage with your cousin Mary so lately dead, but as you are naturally anxious to see Miss Vanhomrigh's affairs settled before you go back to America, I will press the matter on."

Francis' love was as unselfish as a woman's, and with a little time in which to consider it, he could have reconciled himself to anything that was for Esther's happiness; but the unexpected manner in which Swift had sprung the new rival upon him, was too much for the old Adam within him. He turned a shade paler and gripped a knot in the fallen bole on which his hand rested. "Who is this man?" he asked.

"That is my secret, sir," returned Swift smiling. "Yet I do not mind telling you he is a scholar and a gentleman, not without some modest means of his own and certain of good preferment—for he is in orders."

"I might have guessed as much," returned Francis with a short laugh; "who but a parson would have——"

He was going to say "asked your intercession," but it struck him that he himself had gone perilously near doing so.

"Would have—what, sir?" asked Swift drily.

"Could possibly find favour in Miss Vanhomrigh's eyes. She has a singular liking for parsons."

"That was not what you meant to say, Mr. Mordaunt," replied Swift smiling and rising from his seat. "Perhaps you meant Miss Vanhomrigh was destined to have none but parsons for her lovers. But she has now a fortune to attract more dangerous admirers."

"That was not my meaning, Mr. Dean," rejoined Francis, following him as he walked slowly along the river-bank. "Gad, 'tis not only parsons that know how to value Miss Vanhomrigh. As to common fortune-hunters, I'll trust her discretion not to be cheated by 'em."

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"Faith, young gentleman," said the Dean looking round at Francis with a not unkindly but melancholy smile, "you play your part of the brother somewhat too hotly. Are you in love with Miss Essie?"

He kept his eyes fixed on the young man with a still mild, but penetrating and authoritative look, and Francis reddening, answered slowly, as though the words were drawn out of him by some magnetic force rather than voluntarily uttered.

"I cannot tell; but I shall esteem myself very happy if I can win her for my wife."

"And being her husband," rejoined Swift, "purpose to be jealous of an old, sick, deaf parson that she hath had a kindness for. Pshaw, my poor lad! You are in love. Why do you protest 'you cannot tell' if it be so?"

"Because," answered Francis with a vehemence born of anger and confusion at having betrayed to an enemy a secret never hinted to a friend, "because I cannot. If to be in love means to be willing to do any injury to a lady, and cause every ill report of her rather than give up the enjoyment of her company, why then, Mr. Dean, I for one am not in love."

"Neither am I, sir," replied Swift readily, suspecting Francis of shooting random shots at him, but honestly convinced there was no weak place in his conscience where they could stick: "and am heartily with you in thinking scorn of the tender passion. But women, you know, like it, and therefore I will not flatter you, Mr. Mordaunt, by affirming that Miss Vanhomrigh will prefer your reasonable liking to Dr. —— my young friend's warmer sentiments. Besides 'tis a great matter for a lady to travel across the ocean, and perhaps one dark night lose her fine head of hair by some wild Indian's scalping-knife."

"I dare assure you, Mr. Dean, our Plantations have been as well cleared of wild Indians as Cellbridge of wild Irish," returned Francis. "But 'twas far from my desire to speak of my own affairs. I was but desirous to know whether Miss Vanhomrigh's friends would have your support in urging her to leave Ireland."

"I have been the first to do so," Swift answered, "and shall continue my endeavours; unless indeed I can prevail with her to make the marriage I told you of, and which I must honestly say seems to me the most suitable one which offers. But here comes Tom Conolly. Let us go and meet him."

Their host came out of a wood a little ahead of them, with a

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gun on his shoulder, a brace of birds in his hand, and a golden-brown setter at his heels. He greeted the Dean from a distance heartily, not to say uproariously, and the two were soon in lively conversation on the dog's breed; for Swift took an interest in everything, and consequently knew a little about most things.

Swift stayed to dinner at the Conollys, but left the dining-parlour with Mrs. Conolly, alleging the incompatibility of his temperate habits with his host's.

"Moreover," he said as he closed the door behind him, "I must go make my howdees to poor Miss Van. Will you not walk to the village with me, madam? The sun begins to strike less warm, and the air to-day is light and wholesome."

Madam Conolly assented, and as they strolled along the grass beside the carriage-road, he questioned her straitly about Dr. Winter and his courtship, to hear that though persistent, it had so far ended in nothing.

"Well, at any rate you will not allow the savage to carry her off to his wigwam, will you, Madam Conolly? Heavens! I shudder to think of anything so valuable as Miss Essie exposed to the accidents of the American wilderness."

"Savage, Mr. Dean? What do you mean? Oh, Mr. Mordaunt. I deny him to be a savage, but no matter. He is not a lover of Miss Vanhomrigh's nor of any one else's, I should imagine."

"No, nor ever will be," returned Swift with inconsistent disgust. "He may be built like London Bridge, of wood and stone or of iron and steel, for all I know. Yet he must furnish his wigwam like other folks. Find him a squaw for it quick, Madam Conolly, a red-headed Irishwoman that will carry piccaninnies on her back as naturally as a peat-basket. Don't let him carry off Miss Essie."

And he would say no more about it.

"I knew you would come," cried Esther, while Swift was still coming along the garden path. "See, everything is in readiness."

She stood under a beech-tree on the river bank, leaning on a spade, and pointed to a young laurel in a wheelbarrow at her side. It had long been Vanessa's custom to plant a laurel every time her Cadenus came to honour her summer bower by the Liffey, and there was quite a grove of them now between the garden path and the river.

"What a pit have you digged!" said Swift, standing on the

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path; "I can't imagine, Missessy, how you that's a model of indolence when I would have you walk or ride for your health's sake, can delve like Cain—or Abel was it? It may have been Satan for aught you care—for the better comfort of a vegetable."

"A body must value himself much more than I can that 'll run three times upstairs for his lungs, and as many down for his liver, jog along the Strand and back for his head, and spend an hour in tedious company for his spleen. That's you, Mr. Dean."

And she laughed a clear girlish laugh that showed her white teeth, as she flung aside her leather gloves and came towards him through the dappled shadows of the trees.

"Yet 'tis fortunate for me you choose to ride for your head's sake, else should I see you the seldomer. How glad I am to see you, Cadenus!"

She stretched out her two hands to him, and he kissed one beautiful hand somewhat lingeringly. It was a little hard that just to-day her cheek must bloom as delicately, her hair and eyes shine as brightly, as ten years ago in Windsor Park.

"No, child," he said, "but if there were not reasons against it you would see me oftener."

"I knew you were coming to-day. I often think you are coming—'tis all I have to think of now. But to-day I felt such a certainty of happiness that even Cadenus had not the heart to disappoint me."

"You know how your friend spends his days, Essie. Cathedral services and Chapters, beggars and tenants, and all the rest of the scoundrel rout of the Liberties round his neck, public affairs and printers plucking at his gown, and now, though he says it that shouldn't, half Dublin hat in hand to him, and even the Castle bidding for his support and fain to soothe his resentment."

They had turned and were strolling side by side along the familiar path to the bower.

"I know," she returned. "'Tis not my judgment that complains, 'tis my heart that cannot always avoid it. But there's no one so proud and rejoiced as I to see the world fast coming to its place, at your feet. Even your enemies acknowledge you for a great man now, Cadenus."

They reached the narrow ancient foot-bridge, by which on many pleasant summer days like this, they two had crossed the river, and passing through the picturesque ivied gateway, high

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on its worn stone steps, turned their sauntering feet by the shady bank towards the bower. Swift did not care for the picturesque, but it came into his head, as he wrenched open the rusty iron gate, to wonder how soon "the Bridge and the Bower" would be but another of those scenes in the Masque of Memory, which would often pass before his mental vision in the enforced leisure of his long journeys on horseback. He came down the steps slowly, with bent head, while Essie watched him from below, radiant with joy and pride. For she was schooling herself to be content with the glimpses of happiness that his brief visits brought her, and existing from one to the other in a state of quiescence, something like that of a hibernating animal. She was no longer actively miserable, only not quite alive unless he was there or had written.

"Lord, how my wits do go a-wool-gathering!" said Swift at length. "What was we talking of? Oh, of what a great man I am grown, to be sure. Ay, 'tis true I have even more sincere admirers than when 'twas thought I had my hand in the Lord Treasurer's pocket. What of that, little Hess? 'Tis a foolish world that thinks scorn of us when we are yet in the flower of our genius, and waits till we are chap-fallen dotards to do us honour. Why, I was worthy of much more honour thirty years since, my dear, and would have repaid it with a general benevolence, but now the world has too long turned its ragged back on me to make me forget that by this display of its gold-laced waistcoat. But I did not come hither to talk of myself. Why do you always make me talk of myself, Sirrah Hess?"

"Because 'tis so engaging a theme, Cadenus. I am not thoroughly acquainted with you yet, and may meet any day with Cadenus the 100th, the one I have not seen. I hope he is an agreeable fellow, and not at all terrible."

"Silly! Silly, I say! I did not come to talk about myself, and I'll not do't. 'Tis of you I would be talking."

"No, no!" she cried hastily. "That were to talk of stark naught, or worse still, of the spleen. You tell me you take infinite pains to fly the spleen and be merry. That's what I shall try to do to-day. We'll have coffee in the bower."

And she hummed to some tune of her own——

> "A fig for partridges and quails,
> Ye dainties I know nothing of ye,
> But on the highest mount in Wales
> Would rather choose to drink my coffee."

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Swift smiled, recognizing his own doggerel. Esther's favourite haunt, which she called the bower, was hollowed out in the steep, rocky bank of the Liffey, reached by rough steps and furnished only with a stone seat. It was roofed by the spreading lower boughs of a stunted oak, and to the steep bank on either side clung a thicket of thorn-bushes, dipping their own branches and the trails of dark ivy with which they were overgrown, into the rushing water below. For the bed of the river fell somewhat steeply here, and broke the full stream into tiny cataracts, that sent it yet more swiftly rushing on its way. It swirled giddily below the bower, in a narrow channel between the rocky banks and a small island. The willows of the island almost shut out the view of the sloping opposite shore, but to the right of them there was just visible a breadth of bluer stiller water, and a thicket of emerald-green burdock-leaves and rushes and pink willow-herb and yellow ragwort, bright above in the sunshine, and almost brighter in their tremulous reflections below.

They sat down on the stone bench, where a book or two lay awaiting them, but did not read. Essie who had thrust loosely into her black kerchief a spray of white roses and a few crimson carnations, took them out, smelt them, and then arranged them more firmly in her bosom. Then leaning forward with her hands clasped round one knee, she looked at Swift.

"A penny for your thoughts," she said.

"I was thinking," he returned, "how romantic a bower is here, and that 'tis pity its romantic nymph should have no shepherd to bring hither but one that would make an owl laugh. I am in hopes you may have been here with Dr. Winter, since I introduced him to the place. Come, you sly girl, have not you and he visited it since?"

"Why no, Cadenus, nor was I best pleased at your bringing him to it."

"But he has been often here, Miss Essie. For that I'll vouch."

"He visited me at one time pretty often, usually with Madam Conolly, but of late I—I do not see him."

"You blush, sirrah. What's this? You'll not see him because you begin to perceive he is paying you his addresses?"

"Madam Conolly would have me to believe so, sir, but I cannot tell; we females are apt to be too hasty in such matters. Yet sure if the tale runs that way at tea-tables, I were best avoid the gentleman."

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"Lord, what a coil about a poor honest gentleman that pays you his addresses! Faith, Miss Essie, this is not kind to our good Winter, to treat him like a rake."

"Sure, Cadenus, you would not have me a coquette. If he do not value me my conduct can signify little to him, but if he should have a particular regard for me, why—you see I'll not credit him with a *belle passion* for the *beaux yeux de ma cassette* —why then, am I not kind to your friend?"

Esther was looking at the point of her own foot as she spoke. Had she been looking at Swift she would have observed a certain hardening of his expression, as he hardened his heart to carry out the resolution he had already made, in which his conversation with Francis had confirmed him.

"By no means. You are unkind to Winter and, what more nearly affects me, you are unkind to yourself, miss. Yes, you are vastly ill-judged. Why will you not marry Dr. Winter?"

Esther loosed her hands from her knee.

"Do not jest this way, Cadenus," she said.

"I do not jest," he replied almost sternly. "I speak to you as a father or a brother would do, whose affairs called him away from you. I advise you to accept an offer of marriage from this excellent young man, should he still purpose making you one."

Esther rose to her feet slowly. Her cheeks and lips were pale.

"You—you—seriously advise me to marry Dr. Winter?" she stammered, looking at him.

"Indeed, Missessy, I very earnestly advice you to do so!"

She started away the few steps that divided the stone seat from the edge of the rock, and stood there with her back turned to him, her left hand clasping the horizontal branch of a thorn-tree, while her right picked a few ivy-leaves off it one by one.

"This is another guess matter from Dr. Price's business," he continued after a pause. "Price was not to be compared to Winter, either in his genius or in his person. Besides, that was some years back. And pardon my candour, Hesskinage, though Cadenus wears a pair of spectacles that make Vanessa to him everlastingly twenty, the world begins to accuse her of being an old maid."

Esther, still leaning on the tree, turned towards him.

"And yet," she said in a low voice, answering his earlier remark, "I have never concealed that I love you."

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"You write me a deal of nonsense, when you are splenetic, Missessy, but I value it not a penny. 'Tis true, as you once wrote me, I have sometimes wished you devout, that you might bestow your enthusiasm on Heaven, that's less incommoded by such things than a miserable sinner. But in truth I reckon such sentiments to be of too little importance, either to God or man, to be given weight in deciding the fate of one for whom I have so much regard. When you have been a year or two well occupied with the cares of matrimony, you will blush to remember you once made a rout about a trifle which folks call, forsooth, 'Love.'"

She looked at him with hollow eyes and a strange smile.

"A trifle?" she repeated slowly. "Well, it may be so; you are oftenest right. But, Cadenus, if it be so, you should pity me the more that I have spoiled my life for a trifle."

"Pooh, Hesskinage, I'll not admit it spoiled at all, and certainly not for so foolish a cause, though in truth with your fortune and your wit and your person, you might have made a more considerable figure in the world had you chosen. 'Tis your splenetic disposition that's to blame."

"My disposition is some way to blame, I do not question."

"I remember for example you would always despise and detest the converse of the world, whereas the philosopher despises and finds diversion in it. Then you had once some taste for display, and I would chide you for loving to have two footmen at your chair and a smart dress on your back; but since you might honestly allow yourself such indulgences, with female perversity you have ceased to care for 'em. There's but one misfortune you can boast, and that's poor Mollkin's death, with her long illness, that made you a perpetual nurse-tender. 'Tis true I have always been of opinion that you would be happier in England than here. For my part I cannot think why you have stayed in this scoundrel island."

"You cannot think, Cadenus?" Esther burst out. "Oh, but you know. You know I can't live without seeing you."

"I used to tell you, Hess," he said sternly, "that if you would return to England I would visit you there, and we should be easier together than 'tis possible to be among these prying people. Now I tell you solemnly that this is the last time I will visit you here, unless 'tis to find you ready packed for your voyage across the Channel, or ready dressed for your wedding."

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"You desire me then to marry Dr. Winter?"

"I do, Essie. I am confident you would make him an excellent wife, and though there's plenty of women that are rendered miserable by a parcel of squalling brats—I know women that detest brats as much as I do myself—yet you are just the kind to be never so happy as when you've a dozen little masters and misses of your own to look to. I desire you to marry Winter, because he has a sincere regard for you, and is such a husband as you are lucky to get."

Esther had pulled some petals from her white roses, and was curling and crushing them in her hand.

"There's but one reason against it," she said with increasing vehemence, "and that is that I love you."

Swift had like herself grown pale and haggard as they talked. He shrugged his shoulders and made no reply. She cut a kind of pattern with her thumb-nail in a white rose-petal, then lifting her eyes said with lips that trembled so much they could scarcely frame the words:

"You want me to do a wicked thing."

He sighed impatiently.

"This is not reasonable, Essie."

"Reasonable! I am to lie to God and man, and for what reason? That you may be the easier rid of me."

"You are very unjust, child. You know my experience of the world hath long convinced me that marriage is better founded on a reasonable liking than on what is called Love, since 'tis in the nature of that passion to last but a little time."

Esther leaned back against the branch behind her and laughed; but not the girlish laugh with which she had rallied him scarcely half an hour before.

"Ha, ha! Cadenus—you must pardon my laughing—but really you are too monstrously diverting. Last but a little time! Ha, ha! This is exquisite!" And there was another peal of laughter.

Swift flushed and fixed on her his awful look, but for once the thunderbolt fell unmarked.

"Good God!" she cried, not laughing now; "what do you call a little time? Twelve years? Twelve years of torture, Cadenus? Oh, if you had spent 'em as I have, you'd think 'em a thousand!"

"I fear 'tis your disposition to torment yourself, Governor Huff," he returned with forced mildness. "And I cannot take

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the blame of that. I used to say you and the Liffey were of the same temper; you never murmured but sometimes roared. Yet I never knew you rage for much more than fifteen minutes together, and should say your wrath had now but five minutes to burn. Shall we be silent for five minutes by my watch," and he drew the watch somewhat laboriously out of a remote pocket, "in hopes it may be quenched when I speak again?"

"I will do anything you please—except marry Dr. Winter," she replied; but without obeying the gesture by which he invited her to be seated, she turned from him, while he took up a book which lay on the bench.

It was a fatal five minutes which she spent staring into the green and silvery depths of the willows on the island below, and the brown water swirling under them. A crowd of dark and bitter feelings, which had for years been held down, silent and formless in the depths of her heart, rose up now and took shape. They were clamorous and not to be denied. When the five minutes were ended;

"Come now," he said, with the air of a kind parent speaking to an excited child, "what do you complain of?"

"Of my own madness," she returned without looking round. "Yes, Cadenus, as you say, my youth has slipped through my fingers. And youth, as you love to remind us, is the only good money we women have got with which to buy ourselves a share in the happiness of this world. O, what a vile and senseless prodigal have I been! How have I squandered mine! I have bought nothing, nothing with it—no, not so much as one happy day to look back upon."

"Hush, hush, child!" cried Swift, pained and impressed at the bitterness with which she spoke. "This is raving. You have had much to be thankful for."

"I have," she returned quickly. "I was better endowed by Providence than many that have prospered well enough. I had, even you'll allow, more sense than some; but one error—one miserable folly!—Heavens, what a ruin has it made! Why, 'tis the bare truth that there's not a more wretched woman alive than I. One that had bought with her honour a little base felicity would at least have had something for her bargain. I have had nothing, absolutely nothing. All torture—all wretchedness! I have not deserved to suffer so much, Cadenus." And with a gesture of despair she turned once more to the branch of

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the thorn-tree, leaned her arms on it, and hiding her face in them wept bitterly.

Swift was shocked and distressed at her agitation, although it never occurred to him to suppose that her words represented the truth, even approximately. He was silent a little, and then he said:

"Hesskin, it distresses me infinitely to see you in such a state of despondency. You have been too long alone here and have a sick head, as I have sometimes. Go away, my poor Hesskin, go among your friends."

"Where shall I be less alone than here?" she replied, struggling with her tears. "Where are my friends? I have no friend but you, and you are not a true friend to me!"

Swift started with mingled pain, indignation and amazement.

"Essie, I forgive you," he said, "as you forgave me once when I had a bad head and talked against my best friends. Another might not so easily forgive it. In remembrance of that day, I promised you a faithful friendship so long as we both should live, and I have kept my promise."

"It was not like that you promised it," she returned wistfully, with a sob still in her voice. "You said you loved me better than any one else in the world. O Cadenus, was that true?"

"'Tis a question I disdain to answer, Governor Huff," he replied angrily, for his conscience here began to stir. "I ask you in reply, have you kept your promise to be content with friendship, and abjure the follies of Love?"

"Did I promise so?" she asked, and drew her hand across her forehead and sighed wearily. "Then I promised more than I could perform. Had your friendship meant all that it seemed to mean, 'tis very like I should not have been content."

"I visited you but too constantly, when you was first in Dublin, Missessy, and you was never satisfied."

"No, Cadenus, I believe nothing would have satisfied me—but what I could not have."

"Then you acknowledge yourself an unreasonable woman and a promise-breaker?"

"Anything you please," she answered, sighing again. "What does it matter? 'Tis all ancient history. And yet," she added timidly, plucking at the carnation in her bosom, "will you forgive me for asking again, Cadenus? 'Tis not of your feeling now I would make inquisition. But tell me sincerely, was it

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true that I was dearer to you than any one eight years ago? You said so that day."

Swift went even paler than before. His singularly vivid memory brought back to him but too clearly that scene in the Wantage fields and even his own feelings at the time; though feelings are of all things the most difficult to remember.

"It was, Essie," he said solemnly. "May God forgive me!"

"I am glad. But why do you say that?" She fixed her widening eyes on him and spoke in a very low frightened voice; "Was it that—was there——?"

She was about to ask some question, the answer to which would practically tell her whether another woman had had a prior claim on him—a question she would not have dared to ask but for her promise to Molly, not forgotten though unfulfilled.

But before she had framed it, he suddenly put his finger to his lips and frowned warningly. Then speaking in a loud indifferent voice:

"I think, Missessy, I shall best answer your question by reading Lord Clarendon's account of the matter, which I apprehend we shall find in one of these volumes. If not I must e'en fetch it for you from the Book-room. Let me see—volumes 3, 4, and 5."

And he took up the books. Esther hastily seated herself by his side, and began to turn over some pages, while listening to the tap of heels and rustle of a noisy petticoat above. In another minute the heels and the petticoat flounced down the steep steps to the bower, almost landing their owner on her nose at the Dean's feet.

"La, Cousin! Han't I given you a jump? I was sure you'd never hear me coming. I always do move like a mouse. Lud, I'm frightened to death to be so near the water. What a nerve you have, my dear! How do you do, Dean? Sure you look bloomingly."

And Miss Stone sat down between the Dean and Miss Vanhomrigh, much incommoding them with her hooped petticoat.

(*To be continued.*)

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THE GRAND LAMA OF TIBET.

OUR recent negotiations with China concerning the difficulties in Sikkim, wherein we dealt with the Celestials as though they were the arbiters of the destinies of Tibet, have aroused, it would seem, the patriotism of the inhabitants of that snowy land. The suzerainty of the Emperor of China over Tibet has never been formally conceded by the latter country, but the protection and patronage of that monarch were tacitly submitted to, so long as the autonomy of the Tibetan Government was officially acknowledged. Of late, however, more open control had been attempted, and it now would appear that the undisguised arrangement of Tibetan affairs at Calcutta by a Chinese Ambassador with an English Viceroy—when it came to be fully understood in Tibet—has brought the covert enmity to an overt declaration. Private intelligence, distilled over the Himalayan Passes, reported recently that the Chinese envoy on his journey back from the Indian frontier to Lhásá had been murdered. This statement afterwards proved untrue. Nevertheless, it is credibly asserted that the Lamas near the capital of Tibet are indeed banding themselves in factions to resist the encroachments of China, and have been endeavouring to incite their ruler, the Grand Lama, to arouse himself in real manly fashion by expelling the Chinese legates from Lhásá. That the young ecclesiastical monarch should take any such step at present would, however, be extremely unlikely. His youthful age and the circumstances of his local surroundings both negative at least the advisability of any overt action on his part. He has only just entered his seventeenth year of age, and he is hopelessly fettered, under existing conditions, by his mode of residence. Imprisoned, as it were, in the Red Palace, in the heart of the labyrinth of buildings on the Potala Hill, his most trivial movements

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the special charge of functionaries reputed to be in every instance in the private pay of the Chinese Emperor—thus situated, communication between His Holiness and the intriguers outside, would indeed bring his life to a crisis. It is an ominous fact, not to be forgotten, that the present Dalai Lama is the seventh who has ascended the throne of Tibet since the commencement of the current century, yet not one of these has ever attained his twentieth year! But something under this head will be said more plainly later.

On the other hand, there certainly exist at present several circumstances which open out a favourable prospect to the National Party in Tibet. First, the people of the country are thoroughly stirred against the pretensions of China to hold the reins of government. More important still, the young ruler now growing up seems, from the reports of such of our native survey spies as have reached Lhásá, to have developed, notwithstanding his peculiar training, a mental intelligence unusually robust, and such as was wanting to most of his unfortunate predecessors of the present century. Moreover, what is of equal value, he seems to have been also endowed with health and physical strength beyond the average attained by previous Grand Lamas. Consequently, should he be fortunate enough to survive to the age of eighteen, when he is entitled to take over temporal charge of Tibet from the Regent (in addition to his spiritual jurisdiction), the National Party might reasonably expect a capable and even formidable leader. But to understand the possible situation, the position which such a leader would occupy must be realised. However daringly corrupt the Regent and the personal attendants of the Grand Lama may be; nevertheless, by the bulk of the inhabitants of Tibet, by the Mongol hordes of Kho-kho Nur and Chinese Tartary, by the Kalmuks and Buriats of Asiatic Russia, it must be remembered this sacred youth is regarded as a Deity above all other gods. All these, devout and eager Buddhists to a man, would feel compelled at a call from the supreme head of their faith to rush forth to a religious war. The Dalai Lama, the Vicegerent of Buddha upon earth, menaced by the foreigner and his life in danger, would, indeed, be a magic battle-cry. Unorthodox and little touched by their professed religion though the 212 millions of Chinese Buddhists* may

* This number is a liberal estimate of the Buddhist population of China; but see Sir Monier Williams's able strictures on the exaggerated statistics of Buddhism.

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be in ordinary life, we doubt if even they would dare to take up arms with any warmth against the acknowledged pope of the whole body of Northern Buddhists. However, the issue of Grand Lama *versus* Chinese Emperor is one which has never yet been placed before the devoted adherents of Lamaism in Tibet and Mongolia; but few, entitled to an opinion on the subject, can doubt that such an issue is imminent. The excesses recently perpetrated by Chinamen in the former country have produced a crisis which only awaits the advent of an orthodox champion for the opening of a bloody crusade. One can well imagine, moreover, that the Celestial would make but a sorry fighter as an invading enemy, amid the snows and defiles of Tibet. His position in Tibet is very different from what it is in Yarkand. It is not, perhaps, generally known that the normal strength of Chinese troops quartered in the land of the Lamas is only 800.

With prospects such as these, to which we have tried to give their full value, it may be useful in view of impending complications to make clear to European readers who and what the supposed hero of the possible struggle really is. In other words, it will be interesting to many to have here set forth all that recent research has brought to light concerning the person, position and powers of the Buddhist Hierarch, the Grand Lama of Lhásá. Nearly all the accounts hitherto written are full of errors, being mostly derived either from Chinese sources, or from the confused ideas which the Tibetans of the Himalayas have been only able to furnish. Whereas the facts which follow are those which have been communicated direct from the sacred city itself.

The Territory Sketched.

And first as to the extent of the Grand Lama's kingdom. Roughly speaking, it comprises the entire territory lying between the Kiun-lün Mountains to the north, and the Himalayas to the south, and therefore averaging some 650 miles in depth; and stretching, west and east, from Ladak on the Kashmir border, to the confines of Yunnan and Szechuen in China, a distance of 1470 miles. An extraordinary elevated plain, styled Jang-t'ang, occupies the whole northern portion of this territory, at the foot of the Kiun-lün Mountains, extending in a broad band the entire length from west to east, varying in width from 400 to 300 miles. Its elevation is between 16,000 and 17,000 feet throughout; its

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human inhabitants nomadic and sparse; but the plain in parts swarms to a degree simply amazing, with innumerable head of big game, comprising wild yak, wild asses, the monster sheep —*Ovis Ammon* and *Ovis Polii*—possibly the wild camel, and several varieties of deer, which all live on the rich verdure prevailing even at so great a height above sea level. Omitting the Jang-t'ang, the remainder of Tibet to the S. and S.E. is loosely partitioned into five huge provinces: Ngari Khorsum, Tsang, Ui (the metropolitical province), Khams, and Amdo, together with two or three outlying chieftaincies on the Assamese border. All these parts are packed with mountain ranges, flung together in inextricable confusion, and rent by gorges and river-courses in every direction. In the west chiefly, though more or less throughout, vast salt-lakes, curious by reason of their remarkable elevation, lie in the hollows of this uplifted land. With the exception of Ngari Khorsum, these provinces seem to be well populated. So much for the Grand Lama's temporal demesne. His spiritual jurisdiction, as we have already hinted, extends into Siberia, whilst at Peking and in all large towns of Western China are lamaseries owning allegiance to his sway.

Earthly Emanations from Nirvana.

About 2000 years ago, soon after the absorption of the last human Buddha, Shakya-t'ubpa, into the realms of Nirvana, a curious process occurred in that washless and transcendent ocean of Nothingness and Silence. The essence of Shakya-t'ubpa's spirit present in Nirvana, together with the sublimated essences of what had once been the souls of the four human Buddhas who immediately preceded him on earth, concentrated themselves into a single ray of white incandescent light. This ineffable ray shot forth from the region of Nirvana and entered the realms of Dewachen, the Buddhist heaven where saints assemble previous to absorption. Arrived there, it was disintegrated, as by a prism, into its five component elements, which were forthwith re-created into five different celestial Buddhas, each of them correspondent respectively to the five human Buddhas dissolved in Nirvana, whence the beam of light had sprung. These new and celestial Buddhas have ever since then existed in Dewachen, being known as the Dhyani Buddhas, and have manifested the liveliest interest in the affairs of our earth, an interest which Shakyamuni and the other human Buddhas,

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reduced to impalpableness in the void of that which no longer is, could never be expected to take.* However, that this interest might be brought into active operation on the world, the eldest of the five, Kuntu-Zangpo, devised an efficient scheme. He caused to be evolved from himself, and from each of his four coadjutors, five lesser celestial beings, known as Dhyani Bodhisattwas. Each one of these was deputed to act as vicegerent to the respective Dhyani Buddha to whom he was correspondent, and distinct regions of the heavens and of the earth were allotted to them in which to work. Their special duties were to promote the spread of Buddhism, and to help forward individuals inhabiting their own territory in the effort to attain Nirvana. Each Bodhisattwa, in order to bring his powers to bear practically, has thenceforth become incarnate upon earth in a continuous chain in the souls of persons successively occupying some particular office of dignity within the Bodhisattwa's jurisdiction. Thus every holder of the favoured position has been animated by the spirit of one of those powerful creatures, and has been indeed the human embodiment of him ; and on his transmigration from the world, the sacred *tulwa* or psychic essence has passed to a new-born infant, who must be sought out by prescribed methods and constituted his successor.

The Protecting Genius of Tibet.

This necessary explanation will now serve to make clear who the Grand Lama of Lhásá is. The Dhyani Bodhisattwa Spyan-ras-gzigs, "The Seer clad in a garment of Eyes," is the being who has taken Tibet under his special protection. He performs this duty by continuous reappearances or re-births upon earth in the shape of the respective Grand Lamas who succeed one after another to the throne of Tibet. The sovereign hierarch of Tibet is an incarnation or human embodiment, therefore, of the Bodhisattwa Spyan-ras-gzigs (pronounced according to the strange Tibetan orthoëpy "Chenraisi") and not, as is commonly supposed, of Buddha.

The first monarch of the country to be so animated was King Srong-tsan Gampo, who in the 7th century A.D. introduced Buddhist teachers into the land. Chenraisi, the benevolent Bodhisattwa, who is supposed to have eleven faces and one

* Great saints whilst on earth have likewise their celestial emanations, counterparts of themselves, existing in Dewachen.

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thousand arms, is after all none other than the Sanskrit Avalokiteswara, the lotos-born, who is so popular a deity among Japanese Buddhists of the Shigon sect.

When the Grand Lama of Lhásá quits this world—a pretty frequent event, as we have seen, during the present century—the difficulty is to discover his rightful successor. The problem to solve is to find the particular infant into whom the spirit of the late Grand Lama has passed. At death, the soul does not at once enter a fresh body. For a short time, never less than forty-nine days, it endures a ghostly existence known as the Bardo, being at length re-embodied as some newly-born creature, fish flesh, fowl, or demon. After the prescribed period, then, the soul of the defunct Grand Lama—the *tulwa* of Chenraisi—must have appeared somewhere in the world, and, in his case, in human shape. In order to ascertain the identity of the infant thus inhabited and destined for the monarchy of Tibet, a certain oracle has to be consulted. Three miles to the west of Lhásá is to be found a small and very ancient temple, situated in the midst of a beautiful grove. This temple is the celebrated Na-chhung Chhoi-kyong, the home of the most infallible oracle in the whole of Tibet. Here, on a set occasion, do the great state officers of the kingdom assemble to listen to the hermit within the shrine prognosticating the signs and occurrences which, *conjoined*, will mark out (1) the locality, and (2) the particular babe, where and in whom the coming incarnation should be sought. These prognostics are extensively advertised, and many are the parents who claim to have beheld in their new-born offspring the characteristics of the next spiritual Sovereign of Buddhism and Temporal Ruler of Tibet. The meteorological omens at the time of birth, the locality, and the personal marks on the child's body must, however, all coincide with the forecast, and numerous candidates appear, only to be disappointed. Usually, it is asserted, the veritable Simon Pure is discovered by accident, and so many are the points which must conspire to prove his identity that, it is said, when once fairly found, so exactly does every foretold circumstance fall into its place, there is never the least reason to doubt that the real individual has been discovered. But the remarkable fact which deserves to be noticed is this. The humblest and poorest couple in the Tibetan dominions may thus suddenly find themselves elevated into the proudest position, as parents of the king of their country and of the central object of worship throughout

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Northern Asia. Tibet is the true republic! All have there a chance. The lowest may become the sovereign of the land, and even prime deity.

Childhood of the Grand Lama.

During the first four years of his career, the newly identified Grand Lama, who is generally about one year old when "discovered," is permitted to live with his parents. He is placed with them in a palace known as the Ri-gyal P'o-dang, a few miles to the east of Lhásá. There a petty state is at once commenced and maintained. Particular rules are, moreover, observed in the suckling of the precious babe, as well as in his general treatment and deportment. Poor child, his earliest education is allowed to take but one bent. Long lists of Sanskrit syllables are the first sounds his infant lips—or rather his infant throat, for he must frame them deep from the throat—are taught to utter. The present Grand Lama of Tibet is alleged to have committed to memory and to have been capable of reproducing, before he had completed his fourth year, many pages both of the Tibetan classic, the 'Sher Chhyin,' and of Tsong-khapa's ritual work, the 'Lam Rim Chhenpo.'

At the age of five, or younger, the sacred boy is brought with much ceremony to his permanent residence, the Red Palace on Potala Hill, within the confines of the city of Lhásá; and now he is separated from his mother, who is installed in a handsome residence of her own, and is only permitted occasional stated visits to her royal son. Austerities, too, are commenced; severe ones, it is said. In two years' time, as it seems, the seven-year-old child must be fully prepared to take upon himself the complete vows of a Gelong or monk of the strictest rule, and be duly installed as head of the Nam-gyal Monastery on Potala Hill, as well as Abbot of the great Daipung Ling of 7000 lamas, situated three miles north-west of Lhásá.

When thus completely matured in the ecclesiastical sense, the child obtains perfect religious supremacy over all Buddhists of the Northern cult. The only votaries of the faith who do not directly look to him as the head of their religion are the Buddhists of Burmah, Ceylon, Siam, Kambodia, and Japan. He is the Pope of the Chinese Buddhists, though their allegiance is decidedly nominal and entirely directed by Imperial mandate, and in a very thorough sense of the Buddhists of Tibet, Mongolia, and Siberia,

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and even of the Kalmuks in the Volga provinces of European Russia. We have styled this ineffable being the "Grand Lama;" but that term is a mere European coinage. The Mongols call him the Dalai or Talai Lama, meaning the "Ocean Lama." This is an adaptation of the Tibetan appellation for His Holiness, which is *Gya-ts'o Rimpochhe*, the "Most Precious Ocean," a title doubtless bearing reference to the universality of his wisdom and influence. *Gya-ts'o Rimpochhe*, and likewise, *Gyal-wa Rimpochhe* ("the Most Precious Victor"), are therefore the real designations of him whom we are wont to style "Grand Lama,"—a name which for convenience may be still used. Other honorific titles bestowed in addressing him are the "Blessed Eleven-faced One," the Lord Chenraisi, and the Viceroy of Buddha upon earth. Moreover, in general conversation, he is familiarly spoken of as *Kyap-gön*, "the Protector."

Although forthwith endowed with this full spiritual jurisdiction, the reins of temporal government are not yet placed in the young hierarch's hands. Separated from his parents, he now finds himself under the supervision and protection of the man who is practically King of Tibet, the Desi or Regent; as a matter of fact, for the past eighty years, the country has known no other kings except the Regents; for, during the whole of that period, not one of the orthodox monarchs has reached—or, rather, has been permitted to reach—the age for assuming the temporal sceptre.

The Tibetan Executive Government.

But this mention of the Regent brings us conveniently to an important part of our subject, namely, the actual government of the country. Theoretically, Tibet is by her constitution independent of China. The two representatives of the Emperor of China, the Ampans, together with the Chinese troops, are supposed to be present in the capital, not as symbolic of the Emperor's suzerainty, but as indicative of his reverence for the spiritual head of the Church. Some two hundred and fifty years ago the Grand Lama's authority was much encroached upon by the Panchhen Rimpochhe of Tashi-lhümpo, who still exercises a semi-independent rule in the province of Tsang. In 1640, the Mongol chief Gusri subdued Tsang and presented that province to the Grand Lama; and thereafter, in view of possible rebellion on the part of unruly subjects, troops first from Mongolia, and

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subsequently from China, were quartered in Lhásá for his protection. Gradual encroachment, however, has been the policy of China; and during the current century the Ampans have insinuated into their presence a real power and influence which, though unacknowledged officially, is none the less tacitly yielded to. This pulling of the wires is accomplished through the Regent, the *de facto* King of Tibet, who, though always a Tibetan, by an alternation of bribes and of threats, becomes too often the mere creature of Chinese policy.

The Regent, accordingly, is now—during the minority of the Grand Lama—at the head of affairs in Tibet. This high functionary is chosen by the Privy Council of Lhásá, which is supposed to select for the office one of the abbots of the four Lings, or chief monastic establishments, of the capital; nevertheless, in recent times, the council has appointed others than those to the Regency. Thus, twenty years ago, we find the head of the famous Galdan Monastery in office. But in the last two appointments the old practice has been reverted to, and the present holder of the reins of government is Tá-tsag Rimpochhe, the Abbot of Kundu Ling. He is assisted in the cares of the kingdom by the five members of the Tibetan Privy Council or Ká-shags Lhen-gyas, to whom all important questions of statecraft are submitted. However this chamber has no legislative work to carry out. It is a fundamental maxim of the Tibetan Constitution that no new laws are ever to be made. The sole business of government, it is asserted, is to find out what *are* the old laws of Tibet, as set forth in ancient writings; and to show at once its virtue and ability, the more closely it can apply these to the present condition of affairs. Judicial as well as executive administration occupies the Kálöns or members of Council; and, as the final appellate judges of the realm, they review the decisions of the Jong-pöns who mete out justice in the provinces. One wholesome rule, in a priest-ridden country such as Tibet, is that four out of this council of five must be laymen. The fifth member, an illustrious personage, known as the Chyi-khyab Khempo, is always an ecclesiastic and head of the Meru Ták Monastery in Lhásá; but the four others, the Kálöns, are usually retired generals of the Tibetan army, men of doughty deeds and good family. Over this Council, then, the Desi or Regent presides, and at the back of the president—though ostensibly far away in their Embassy House outside the walls of the city—are the two crafty Chinese Ampans, quietly working the strings

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that the figures, who seem to the Tibetans to be managing affairs so independently, may leap to the tune of their Imperial master. However, we have been assured by those who ought to know that the Kálöns are not always so docile as the Chinamen could desire; and that, moreover, impatience of this unwarrantable sort of dictation has been the characteristic feature of the proceedings of the Tibetan Cabinet of late.

The Grand Lama's Residence.

During the major portion of his short life, the Gya-ts'o Rimpochhe dwells on Potala Hill. About a mile distant from his official residence, and outside the south-western bounds of the city, is another palace known as the "Grove of Jewels," whither he is conveyed in the depths of winter, when the cruel icy winds render his usual dwelling-place on the top of a hill unbearable even to a Tibetan. However, the labyrinth of buildings piled upon this three-peaked hill constitutes his real home.

Potala, precipitous in many places, rises within the confines of the outer city of Lhásá in the north-western quarter. It is heaped up in the most fantastic style with halls and storied temples and monster tombs; but, on looking up from the foot of these heights, the whole series seems conjoined into one vast structure, surmounted by five gold-plated rectangular domes of great size. The chief erection is the P'o-dang Marpo, or "Red Palace," a building carried up to the height of eleven storeys, and which is ascended from storey to storey by means of wooden ladders with broad but difficult steps. This is the central edifice round which the others climb and cluster. The lower storeys are built against the sheer face of the acclivity. After passing up a steep path avenued by trees, you arrive at the principal or eastern doorway of the whole establishment. Here, first, is a long hall, up which you may ride on pony-back if you choose. The hall is garnished on either hand by long rows of massive prayer-cylinders which, placed like barrels on end on well-oiled pivots, can be easily made to revolve with a touch as you pass along. Each barrel has within it, wound compactly on the iron axle passing from top to bottom, innumerable lengths of paper, on which has been stamped many thousands of times the well-known formula *Om Mani Padme Hum*—the special invocation to the Bodhisattwa Chenraisi, and therefore to the Grand Lama who visibly impersonates him. At the end of the hall are broad stone steps

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which mount to a paved landing where stands an obelisk. You are now again in the open air; and two long flights of steps, hemmed in by the outer walls of other buildings, ascend up the face of the hill to the ground floor of the Red Palace. Thence the ladder-climbing commences. Five long ladders, one after the other, have to be scaled, passing up and up through dark and mysterious vaults—really vestibules to the neighbouring buildings—some with weird-looking passages conducting who shall know whither? At the top of the fifth ladder things seem brighter, since now you enter the more habitable portion of the palace, comprising suites of rooms, set above set. On this floor, in an adjoining apartment, are the lower limbs of an elephantine image of Jham-pa, the Buddha-to-come. He is seated on a platform in this room, and his figure is of such colossal proportions that it passes up through the floors of the two other storeys above this one. Altogether the image is said to be about seventy feet high. When you have reached the third floor of the upper portion of the palace, you may walk round and gaze upon the monster head and shoulders of this gilded Buddha. All orthodox visitors on their way up perform solemn circumambulation round the legs, the body, and the shoulders, respectively, once on each of the three floors through which the effigy has been reared. Above the head of this Jham-pa—who, by-the-way, answers to the Indian Maitreya—you pass forth into the corridors and halls which crown the summit of Potala. Here, in cloistered arcades, you obtain striking views of Lhásá and the surrounding country. To the rear of the large reception-hall—where you have now arrived—are seen the huge gilt *ganjira* or finials of the tombs within which have been laid the mortal remains of defunct Grand Lamas.

But, behold the audience-chamber of the still-living successor of those sad-lived and prematurely-cut-off boy-sovereigns! You are summoned to pass inside the august hall of state. With awesome feelings you find yourself in a lengthy apartment, the roof of which is supported by rows of wooden pillars. The panelled divisions of the walls on either side display paintings descriptive of scenes in Chenraisi's past career. Here are also ranged statues of the Grand Lamas of the present dynasty. The upper end of the hall is adorned with rich tapestries and with some magnificent hangings of satin draped in the form of a cylinder to represent the *gyal-ts'an* or Buddhist flag of victory. In the centre of the chamber rises an elevated divan, with a

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sort of reredos behind it tastefully painted in the Chinese style, and supported right royally beneath by a row of carved wooden lions. That is the throne altar of the Grand Lama of all Tibet.

But to obtain an interview with His Holiness the Kyapgön is a matter of some difficulty. However, let it be supposed that you are fortunate enough to be admitted to the presence. You are seated on rugs spread in about eight rows, not directly in front but rather to the left of the throne. When you are seated, there is perfect silence in the hall. The State officers walk to and fro before the throne with the serenest gravity as becomes their exalted rank. Of these, the leader seems to be the Kuchar Khanpo, or "Doctor of the Holy Rain," who carries in his hands the Bowl of Benediction, containing water coloured with saffron destined to be sprinkled over the audience. Next march up the Solpön Chhenpo bearing the royal golden teapot, the Chief Censer holding up the incense-pot suspended by three golden chains, and other domestic officials. These, when arrived in the Grand Lama's presence, stand motionless as figures in a picture, keeping their eyes fixed on vacancy in front. Two large and tall lamp-burners, made of gold in the shape of half-closed lotos flowers, have been placed on either side of the throne, and lambent flames flicker up from the petals of each. And on the throne itself is seated the Vice-Regent of Buddha upon earth, a child of scarce a dozen years. A mitre of yellow velvet crowns the young monarch's head, pendant pieces from each side of it veiling his ears; whilst his person is robed in a long yellow cloak. He is seated crossed-legged, with the palms of his hands laid flatly together with out-pointed fingers elevated to bless us. Each of the audience in turn is summoned to pass before His Holiness to receive benediction and to survey the sacred countenance. Sarat Chandra Dás, who was admitted to a reception such as is here portrayed, remarks: "Some approached the divine child with downward looks, not having the audacity to look up into his face. I wanted to linger a few seconds in His Holiness's presence, but was not allowed to do so, other candidates for benediction displacing me by pushing me gently on. The princely child possessed a really bright and fair complexion with rosy cheeks. His eyes were large and penetrating. The cut of his face was remarkably Aryan, though somewhat marred by the obliquity of his eyes. The thinness of the face was probably owing to the fatigues of the ceremonies of court, of his religious

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duties, and of the ascetic observances to which he had been subjected since taking the vows of monkhood." *

After the benedictory reception, all being re-seated, the Solpön Chhenpo pours tea into the golden cup of the Grand Lama from out the golden teapot. Assistants pour tea into the cups of the audience. Then the Grand Lama lifts his cup and thereupon a *mantra* by way of grace is solemnly chanted, beginning with the triple repetition of the formula—

"Om : Ah : Hoom : P'ât ! "

When the sacred child has emptied his cup, the devotees below in one body lift their cups slowly and silently to their lips and drink likewise. Three times is the tea served, and the same ceremonial conducted ; after which the audience replace their vessels in their respective breast-pockets. In continuance the Solpön Chhenpo deposits next a golden dish heaped up with boiled rice in front of His Holiness. Of this he only makes a show of eating ; and the greater quantity of it is distributed amongst those present, who carefully bestow it about their persons as precious relics of their interview. Another grace is said ; and then any special ritual ceremony which may be required follows. When Sarat Chandra Dás obtained his interview with the Dalai Lama, the reception was succeeded by a curious rite, the object of which was to expedite the transit of the soul of some grand ecclesiastic, just deceased, from the Bardo (the Buddhist Hades) to the blessed realms of Dewachen where the Dhyani Buddhas reside. At this ceremonial the child chanted a dirge which was supposed to facilitate such transit.

From the audience-chamber the visitor is conducted to various halls and chapels. Among the more notable curiosities shown therein are a huge image of Shinje, the god of Death, with six faces, reputed to have been consecrated by Zekzan the "atom-eater," and a large chamber hung with very ancient and rich tapestry, where the first Dalai Lama used to hold his court. The tombs of the deceased pontiffs come next. They are of different sizes, but all are capped with huge golden cupolas. The loftiest holds the mortal remains of the fifth Dalai Lama, who flourished two hundred and thirty years ago. It is gilded all over and bears the honorific title of *Dzambuling Gyan.* On demise the body is at once wrapped in jewelled cloths on which have been inscribed innumerable Sanskrit syllables. After

* Secret Report to Indian Government, unpublished as yet.

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undergoing a drying process in its shroud, it is deposited in a case which is built into the gilded sepulchre prepared for its reception. The holiness of any Grand Lama is estimated according to the shrinkage of his body after death. That of the holiest is said to have shrunk at the moment of death, until it measured only fifteen inches in length!

The Murder of the Boy Kings.

From the foregoing sketch of the Dalai Lama and his surroundings, a fairly correct idea of his position at the present time may be arrived at. So long as he is but a child, the Chinese need never be at a loss to find plausible reasons for their interference in the public affairs of Tibet. The Emperor is the traditional guardian of the pope of the Buddhist Faith; and so long as the latter is unable to keep up his lofty pre-eminence unsupported, his sacred interests must be solicitously watched by his lawful protectors. And well indeed does the Chinaman know how to utilize this idea to his own advantage. Did ever a more mercenary and leaden-hearted race exist in the world? Cold, calculating, devilish, this people seem to be permitted, through some inscrutable Providence, to flourish in order that they may prey upon the deepest and holiest feelings of other nations. Hardly evincing hope beyond the present world themselves, and base of heart, they make use of the religious instincts of nobler races to maintain that leech-like grip in the dark places of the earth by which only their prolific swarms can find subsistence. Thus does the guileful Chinaman easily outwit the people of Tibet. The one, slow, patient, cowardly yet untiring; the victims, frank, fervid, brave, and passionately religious.

And what is the sober statement of the case? This: that in order to maintain their footing in Tibet and thus reserve for their exclusive advantage the commercial products of the country, as well as remain the sole suppliers of its natural wants, the Chinese authorities scruple not to bring about the murder of each successive sovereign of the land before he comes of age. In this way five at least of the Grand Lamas of Lhásá during the present century have been deliberately put to death under secret orders from Peking. Each youthful king seems to be suffered to survive until he all but reaches the age for full sovereignty; and then the edict goes forth that he must die, and

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some subtle instrument accomplishes the bloody end. The great ministers of state in the country appear to be conscious that the lives of their sacred rulers have been terminated one after another by foul play; but, heretofore, so completely have they been cowed by the threats, or silenced by the bribes, of the Chinese ambassadors at Lhásá, that no real efforts have been made to save each young sovereign from his fate. As to the general public, so mystic is the existence of their spiritual ruler to them, that cajolery makes short work with their doubts. Easily indeed are they deluded with the official statements on the subject. So satisfied, they are informed, is the blessed Chenraisi with the state of Buddhism in Tibet, that he deems it necessary in these times to make but a brief residence on earth in each of his successive incarnations; and then his earthly representatives, sated with their own holiness, are the more easily and more swiftly fitted for Nirvana, the goal of all hope. Nevertheless, the tragedy has been now so frequently enacted, that the true meaning of it all is dawning even on the clouded brains of the ordinary lama-folk and husbandmen. The unsettled feeling is gaining currency, and the feeling by instinct broods darkly over the detestable friends who have so long been borne with. Some fifty years ago, a section of the community discovered that the frequent departures of their protector were not exactly spontaneous. Foul play was suspected, and a rising of the inhabitants of Lhásá led to the massacre of many Chinese residents there, and it was only by ruse and by humouring that the insurrection was quelled before it spread into the provinces.

However, Chinese subtilty is ever equal to the occasion. It often assumes a charming frankness which takes away from the rebellious all *casus belli* by assuring them they were right in their grievance, but misdirected in their suspicion as to the authors of it. When the tumults we speak of arose in 1843, it was the successive deaths of three Grand Lamas in the flower of their age which formed the motive for agitation. These deaths had severally occurred during the regency of one man. This individual was Ts'ak-tur Nomenkhan, abbot of the Ts'o-mo Ling at Lhásá. The Chinese Government admitted that dark deeds had been evidently perpetrated. The Desi or Regent was the man who had murdered, or caused to be murdered, these innocent and most holy youths. He must be dethroned and banished, and the power of the Celestial Emperor

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would assist the Tibetan Privy Council in that retributive proceeding. Thus was the unscrupulous instrument of the Chinese authorities abandoned by his masters and instigators in the deftest possible manner. They who were the real murderers assumed the *rôle* of protectors of the Tibetan monarchy and avengers of treason; and the scapegoat was punished not for murder, but for insufficient subtilty in its perpetration.

Since these events, however, the old policy has not been altered. In 1855, the Grand Lama, Ngag-dbang Dge-dmu Lobzang, came to an untimely death at the age of eighteen years. His successor, Lobzang P'rin-las was suffered to arrive at the age for assuming temporal control, and even formally invested with full power, when he was almost immediately poisoned. That was in 1874, when he was nineteen years old. In 1875, the present Dalai Lama, Ngag-dbang Blobzang T'ub-ldan, was installed in the pontifical seat, being one year old. He is now sixteen years old; and in one year and a half from now he will be entitled to supersede the Regent as King, spiritual and temporal, of all Tibet. But let him not hope to see that day. Some time ere then, the embalmed body of the stripling —"The Sensible Eloquent Possessor of Might," as his name may be rendered—will be solemnly interred in a gold-plated sarcophagus amid the tombs behind his old reception-hall. That indeed is the sure fate awaiting him; unless before that day his subjects summon heart of grace to do what they might well have done long ago—to strip off the handful of parasites who crawl about their magnificent mountains and glaciers—these miserable, gold-munching, plotting Chinamen—and fling them over their snowy battlements, out of Tibet, into the land that bred them, and which teems and festers with many million such.

Failing decisive action of that sort, I suppose it is too much to hope that England, in the interests of sheer humanity, should interfere diplomatically, and sternly express to the Chinese Emperor her abhorrence of the dastardly policy of assassination pursued in Tibet. But that seems to be a bootless trust after all. Imagine our mealy-mouthed diplomacy pitted against the astute statecraft of China! Our spokesmen have lost the blunt tongue which would know how to characterise plainly the bland repudiation of responsibility with which the Celestial meets remonstrances of the kind. It would be merely a repetition of the negotiations of the United States concerning Korea.

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TIBET *versus* CHINA.—A HOLY WAR.

It is a more probable forecast, if we predict that the Tibetans will take the initiative and act for themselves. Then we shall see whether or not Chinese weakness is, as the editor of the *Spectator* confidently assures us, "a thing of the past." Europeans have always misconceived both the right of China to Tibet and her real hold upon that benighted land. Her claim to superintend the affairs of Tibet has only taken definite shape during the present century. The repeated assassinations of the rightful sovereigns in their boyhood have been coolly planned, in order to afford colourable pretext for intervention under the guise of solicitude for the cause of Religion. The Tibetans, brave though peaceful, have thus allowed a tradition of protection to accrue which is fast developing into an unbearable tyranny. Sir Alfred Lyall, in a recent notable article, considered he had made out a decisive case in support of the Chinese pretensions to suzerainship by quoting an extract from the *Peking Gazette*, wherein the Emperor of China declared in set terms his official confirmation of the instalment of the reigning Dalai Lama to the throne of Tibet. Whereupon the editor of the *Spectator*, taking the hint apparently from Sir Alfred Lyall, expanded the idea into a statement that there existed, "a rule, never broken, that the Emperor must sanction the election of the Dalai Lama." Does this editor really possess any actual proof of his rule? Well, indeed, does the Chinese government succeed in hood-winking outsiders. Assume a right with sufficient bombast, and ninety-nine out of a hundred will accord it you. However, in this particular case, inquiries made in Tibet itself would soon reveal what a bogus affair is the official record of Imperial assent to the appointment of a Grand Lama of Lhásá. It is a mere assumption, this ratification in the *Peking Gazette*, intended to impose upon the foreigners' credulity, and to enhance to his own subjects the general notion of the Emperor's world-permeating sway. The Grand Lama, when the record is published, has been already "discovered" and proclaimed. There is nothing, however, to prevent Queen Victoria confirming the appointment in the *London Gazette*, if the whim were to suit our policy as it does the policy of the Emperor of China. Let us remember that so late as the year 1801, it was a British whim to style the monarch of these isles "King of France."

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However, the support which the British Government has been lately vouchsafing to the Chinese pretensions is neither wise nor equitable. As I write, arrangements are being made by the Indian Department for a meeting of Commissioners at Darjiling to adjust the differences between England and Tibet; and these Commissioners are only three in number, one representing England and two China! Surely, in common fairness, when Tibet, an independent kingdom, is the land we wish to deal with, some representative Tibetan should be included in the Commission? It is sheer tyranny and insult to bolster up the unfounded claims of the Chinese by concluding with them a treaty which is to bind a third nation; and such a course is well calculated to exasperate the Tibetans against both China and ourselves. But for the secret instigations of the Chinese agents in Tibet, there would have been no disturbance of our peaceful relations with the latter country. The Tibetans have hitherto been disposed to meet all peaceful advances on our side in a liberal spirit; and, without the underhand machinations of China misrepresenting our intentions, no hostilities would have ever occurred. As it is, what right have we to expect that the independent Tibetan nation is to consider itself bound by treaties and settlements made between England and an overbearing neighbour whose lordship it repudiates? As well might we deem Servia bound by negotiations concluded in her name by the Emperor of Russia.

As to the hold of the Celestial in Tibet, it is indeed a feeble grasp. The Tibetans hate the Chinese cordially. They have laid down strict rules concerning their intrusion into the land. Chinese officials or traders permitted to reside are not suffered to bring Chinese wives with them. They may, if they choose, marry Tibetan women, but the offspring are then reckoned as Tibetans. Indeed, if it were otherwise ordered, the Chinamen, with the prolific consorts of their own nation, would soon supersede the natural people of the soil. So, having regard to the unpopularity as well as the numerical sparseness of Chinese residents in the country, we would venture to predict a speedy if not a safe exodus, of these from Tibet should hostilities actually arise. Moreover, the position of the Chinese warring against the Buddhists of Tibet would be incomparably different in many aspects from the Chinese warring againt the Musalmans of Chinese Turkestan. The way to the latter dependency lies by the northern route through what is mainly an easy steppe country. The way to Lhásá, from the borders of Szechuen and

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Yunnan, traverses a tract several hundred miles in breadth, which in its physical difficulties, to those who would penetrate it, is simply unparalleled anywhere in the world. The Chinese themselves, in their printed itinerary of the dangerous route to Lhásá, particularise many of the monster glacier-girt mountains by a peculiar designation, meaning those which "claim the life" of the traveller. But an obstacle of more importance to invaders than the impenetrability of these strange regions would be found in the hostile attitude of the wild and courageous mountain tribes, those not only inhabiting the intervening districts which separate the central parts of Tibet from China, but also those dwelling in the bordering hills of Chinese territory itself. West of Bat'ang, and between the "River of Golden Dust" (Kin-tsa Kiang), and the Tsiamdo Chhu, lies a vast series of alternate ridge and valley tenanted by many thousands of the Kham-pa race, a turbulent people, devoted to brigand pursuits, yet devotees of the Grand Lama, and noted for the most passionate religious fervour. Further north are numerous colonies of the Sifan tribes, whose black tents and miscellaneous herds of cattle swarm in every valley of the half mountainous, half open country stretching from the head waters of the Hoang-ho north-east to Khokho Nur. These also are staunch upholders of the Tibetan hierarch, with a strong anti-Chinese animus. Even the bloodthirsty horse-robbers, known to the Tibetans as *Golok* or "queer heads," whose columns sweep, periodically, most of the districts to the south of Khokho Nur, reaching in their raids so far south as the Jog-chhen and Yulung mountains lying between lat. 32° and 33° N., even these fierce bands swear by Tsong-khapa and the Grand Lama eternal hatred to the Chinese name. All these headstrong races inhabit only the approaches to Tibet Proper; and in the event of an advance of the Imperial forces into the latter country could and would effectually hem them in, both on the northern flank and to the rear. What would become of any number of troops if they succeeded in penetrating so far west as the snowy monsters and bottomless gorges which lie beyond the course of the Gya-ma Ngul Chhu (Silver Measuring-rod River) beset by hosts behind them as well as by the Tibetans themselves, it is not difficult to conjecture. The commissariat in these regions, moreover, would not be the least question to be adjusted.

However, a fair idea of the character of the country to be traversed may be arrived at by studying a good map of the territories lying between the confines of China and the capital of Tibet.

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In the Yarkand expedition, the enemy whom the Imperial armies (after some years of warfare) at length subdued, were Musalmans, and the victors were, at least, professed Buddhists. Accordingly, they had none of these flank and rear subsidiary enemies to harass them or cut off their eastern communication with the mother country. In any enterprise against Tibet, the condition of affairs would be exactly the reverse. The fierce mountain tribes and robber hordes, who would sympathise in an anti-Musalman crusade, would infallibly prove enthusiastic auxiliaries of the threatened Buddhist populace of Tibet; whilst the great Mongol racé in Chinese Tartary would eventually join in the fray. And as to the Russians, further north, would they stand aloof? I need hardly speculate on that issue.

GRAHAM SANDBERG.

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UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.

BY STEWART DAWSON.

I.

"AND therefore," continued a somewhat high, piping voice, the voice of the Provost, "in the face of the ribald excesses, and the offences against proper Academic discipline, which have of late, and especially during the present term, marked the history of the College, it becomes incumbent on us to enforce those powers which by the wise constitution of this ancient foundation are committed to our charge."

The Provost rolled these last words over his tongue as if their enunciation did him good, stopped dead, and looked very much as if he were going to sleep; but waking up at a warning cough and a still more warning look from the Dean, he continued:

"Three times this term have senior members of this College, the most respected of its Fellows and Tutors, been made the victims of rude and insulting practical jokes, by—by——"

Here the Provost, who was speaking slowly, and with hesitation, as if he were repeating by heart a lesson he had but indifferently mastered, appeared in some danger of losing the thread of his discourse; whereupon the Dean on his right hand, coming to his rescue, muttered the words "Screws! fireworks!"

"Ah, yes! as the Dean reminds me, his outer-door was fastened with screws, and fireworks were ignited beneath his windows; in short, there is a rebellious spirit in the College, more fitting to—to——"

"To the brutal licence of a military mess," suggested the Dean, tugging at his bristly black beard, and trying hard to look as if he understood what he was talking about.

"Quite so, Mr. Dean," from the Provost, whose military knowledge was confined to an exact acquaintance with the

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composition of the phalanx and the legion; "quite so, than to one of the first colleges in Oxford. You deny, Mr.—Mr.——"

The Provost hesitated, it would ill-consort with his dignity to remember off-hand the name of an undergraduate.

"Beaton, Charles Beaton,"—this from the Dean.

"Ah, yes! Mr. Beaton, you deny any complicity in these attacks?—which we unfortunately are not in a position to bring home to you. But you acknowledge, as indeed you cannot help doing, your participation in the disgraceful riot of last night, that you—you——"

The Provost hesitated again, and began to turn over with feeble, uncertain touch the papers lying before him.

The Dean on his right hand as aforesaid, and the Bursar on his left, knew what he wanted, and in a twinkling the record of Charlie's delinquencies was in the Provost's hand.

"Yes, after a supper, a bump-supper, held——"

"Without my permission," interpolated the Dean.

"To celebrate some success gained by the College boat on the river, you at the head of a party of some twelve or fourteen undergraduates, all like yourself members of the boat's crew——"

"Not all fourteen, sir," urged Charlie. "The boat's only an eight, not a trireme."

"Silence, sir! At the head of several men, junior to yourself, you invaded the rooms of one of the most respected and hard-working exhibitioners of the College, dragged him from his bed, and rumpled his hair. You do not deny this; as I understand your only defence is that it is a common custom in the College."

"Certainly, sir," said Charlie Beaton. "I've often been treated so myself."

"Such a defence, sir," replied the Provost, with judicial emphasis, "is no defence at all; it is but an aggravation of your culpability. It—it betrays a state of affairs we will no longer permit to exist within our walls; a—a——"

The Provost was again at a loss for a word, and looked enquiringly at the Dean; receiving for once no assistance in that quarter, he turned towards the Bursar, who suggested "Rowdyism!"

"That is not the word I should have selected, Mr. Bursar, but, if I understand it aright, it conveys my idea. The person who would be guilty of an unprovoked assault on his fellow-student, would shrink from no subversion of Academic discipline; and

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that you were the ringleader in such an assault I hold your own confession."

"I didn't assault him—none of us did," maintained Charlie.

"You rumpled his hair, sir," returned the Provost severely, "it is here in your own words, taken down by myself, 'I don't deny that I rumpled his hair.' 'Rumpled,' your own phrase, Mr. Beaton, the word is not of my choice. Your companions, to whom as a senior man you should have been careful to set a better example, will be sufficiently punished by being confined to the College gates for the remainder of the term; but we cannot but regard your case as so significant of the present *lawless condition of the College*," the Provost gave great emphasis to these words, and glanced the while triumphantly at the Bursar, feeling that he had expressed the idea of "rowdyism" without having recourse to so slang a term, "as to call for far different measures; as regards yourself, therefore, Mr. Beaton, we are compelled to vindicate the discipline of the College, and to punish this outrage in an exemplary manner. Your name must therefore be removed from our books; you are no longer a member of this College or of the University, and you must leave Oxford by this evening at the latest."

The Provost was silent; glad to have acquitted himself of an uncongenial task; for he was a kindly old gentleman and disliked inflicting punishment; indeed he looked far less at ease than did the culprit he had just sentenced, who stood, pale of face, but determined and unabashed in demeanour, at the foot of the long table in the Common Room, around which were gathered the august body who had just decreed his banishment.

"Do you wish to say anything, sir?" asked the Dean sternly.

"Thank you, sir," replied the exile with emphatic, perhaps over-emphatic politeness; "it might have been better to ask that question before I ceased to be a member of your College and University; as an outsider, I have no right or desire to interfere in your deliberations."

"You may go, sir."

And Charles Beaton forthwith made his exit from the Common Room.

The Provost rose and dissolved the meeting; and in a few minutes the room was empty, save for the Rev. Peter Champneys, the Dean, and the Rev. Lewis Wagstaffe, the Bursar, who stood in deep discourse by the Oriel window overlooking the great quad of the College.

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"He got through the business pretty well," said the Dean, in patronising tones.

"Yes, for him, thanks to your prompting," replied the Bursar, with even less disguised contempt. "Look at him," he continued, jerking his head, to show of whom he spoke, towards the tall bent form of the Provost, who, with shuffling gait, was slowly making his way across the quad to his own lodge, "look at him, breaking fast; and I say it in no unkindly spirit, my dear Champneys, but with the interests of the College at heart, the sooner the better!"

Having so delivered himself, the Bursar sighed sympathetically, and caressed his chin with a hand somewhat overloaded with rings. He was proud of his hand, perhaps also a little proud of his rings, and could not resist the impulse to show them off even to so irresponsive a spectator as Peter Champneys, who cared as little for the one as for the other.

"The Provost really seems unable to put three words together on the most ordinary matters of routine; the only times to-day when he conquered his hesitation was when he brought in a few of his stock phrases, 'the wise constitution of this ancient foundation,' out of his annual freshmen's sermon and so forth."

"Ah! I fear he is a Philistine," said the Bursar; "his own inclination would have been to condone young Beaton's offence, because I suppose he is a rowing man, who has made the boat successful."

"We are going to rack and ruin as fast as we can," said the Dean flatly, knitting his brows and shaking his shaggy locks in the direction of the retreating Head of the College. "He's behind the spirit of the age; our present position is deplorable, we are a by-word—a by-word in Oxford, where we used to set the standard of excellence. When he——," the Dean hesitated.

"Goes," suggested the Bursar softly.

"Yes, goes; his successor will have great chances. Passmen must of course be abolished; every undergraduate here must be a candidate for honours."

"Other colleges do it, why not ourselves? Then the absurd devotion to athletic pursuits must be checked. I actually believe there are some here who consider the Captain of the College-boat Club as important a personage as ourselves!"

"And, above all things, discipline must be rigorously enforced. Anything more pitiable than the present state of affairs."

"Ah! these screwings up, and insulting discharges of fire-

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works," said the Bursar, with deep feeling, "they argue a brutish disregard for the artistic side of the Academic life which I cannot help attributing to our unfortunate architectural disadvantages. Were the College buildings more worthy of our patriotic pride, these outrages would be less likely to occur. By-the-way, I have heard from Mr. Radclyffe, the architect, as to the new building's scheme."

"Radclyffe—a very expensive man, surely; he is at the top of the tree, is he not?"

"The first man of the day, my dear Champneys; no one else could adequately design a new front for this College. He suggests that we should acquire land beyond the Provost's garden, and place our new quadrangle there, with a frontage to the High Street."

"But, my dear Wagstaffe, the cost would be enormous! How could we stand such a drain on our finances?"

"The College finances are in good case, my dear Dean, you may take the Bursar's word for that; our rents have never been so high or so regularly paid. Besides, such an addition would pay its own way as a speculation; I should anticipate that, with the other reforms we contemplate, it would go far to double our numbers. I only regret that all our reforms are delayed. If the Provost would only——"

"Well, well, all in good time," replied the Dean, with ghoul-like pleasantry; "we have done well at any rate to get rid of that young man to-day. He is a disturbing element in the College, a specimen of all that is objectionable—a passman, a rowing-man; occasionally, I believe, a hunting-man; ah! we must eliminate all such when the Provost—goes."

"I suppose there can be no doubt," said the Bursar, with a little hesitation, "of Beaton's being concerned in the outrage on my 'oak.'"

"And on mine; do not forget, pray, that I have been similarly insulted. Doubt! *I* have no doubt of it! Have you?"

"I? No! But the general feeling of the Common Room was that there was not sufficient evidence."

"I cannot conceive what evidence the Common Room required. One would think from their views that we were bound by the rules of an ordinary Court of Justice. He acknowledged to possessing a screw-driver which fitted the screws in my door, that is quite enough for me with Mr. Beaton; but when he asked if the fact of his having a box of matches in his waist-

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coat pocket was enough to convict him of having lit the fireworks, some of the junior Fellows so far forgot themselves as to laugh."

"Fortunately, as regards the other matter he had no option but to admit enough for our purpose, and we are rid of him. And I trust we shall soon be rid of all the set he ably represents."

"With whom he appears immensely popular. I suppose," said the Bursar, with a sigh, "I must go and settle accounts with him before he leaves. An unfortunate interruption to me, when I was busy with Radclyffe's proposal for the new buildings. Still, they can wait, for the Provost will not hear of the scheme."

"He considered it too speculative to involve the College in the mortgages you proposed, did he not?"

"Yes, he has narrow, old-fashioned views on finance as on other matters. I pointed out to him that a corporate body like ourselves could safely do what in the case of a private individual might be unwise; but he tersely said debt was debt, whether one owed it or many. We must wait, and prepare the way of reform by purging the College of its malcontents, which reminds me of Beaton. I will go and make out the account of his Battels, and then write to Mr. Radclyffe."

II.

One fine summer morning, just ten years after Charlie Beaton's compulsory disappearance from Oxford, the Rev. Lewis Wagstaffe sat in his gorgeous apartments in the gorgeous new buildings of his College before a writing-table which groaned with the paraphernalia of his office; for amid all the changes which ten years had brought to the shifting microcosm of that "ancient foundation," Lewis Wagstaffe was its Bursar still. The Provost, that kindly old gentleman who in the past so unwillingly decreed Charlie's banishment, has long been dead; he sleeps, not with his fathers, but with his predecessors in office in the College chapel, and Peter Champneys, sometime Dean, reigns as Provost in his stead. For the rest, there are changes in the Common Room, where practically a fresh generation of Dons is in residence; changes even more wholesale among the undergraduates, of whom some three generations have passed through the College since we left it, along with Charles Beaton, ten years ago; but, amid all this ebbing and flowing of the human tide, the Bursar sticks constant to his 'post, a sort of

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Academic Casabianca. Why? It cannot be from any fondness for it, to judge by his expression as he sits this morning in the midst of a perfect chaos of accounts, looking the picture of discontent and misery. And no wonder, for before his bewildered gaze are spread in hideous confusion account-books of every shape and size, bank pass-books, cheque-books, bundles of old cheques, papers and parchments of legal and uninviting aspect, besides a general litter of correspondence and memoranda. Let us listen to the excellent Bursar, as he mutters to himself, staring the while with rueful visage on an open letter of ominously blue complexion.

"What overrated ass invented the proverb that when things are at their worst they will mend? My experience is that when things are at their worst, they invariably get worse still in no time. 'This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof.' What does Peterson say?"

And again he referred to the letter, and read aloud:

"101, Lincoln's Inn Fields,
"*June* 2, 188—.

"DEAR SIR,

"I beg to remind you that on the 24th inst. a further principal sum of £1200 will be due from your College on account of the debt on your new buildings, together with the further sum of £300 for interest and arrears of interest on the same account.

"I enclose a memorandum of various sums also due from your College at the same date to several parties, on account of the various mortgages on your properties, the particulars whereof are therein set forth. Such sums amount altogether to £520. You will therefore have to be ready to pay through our hands on quarter-day next (the 24th inst.) the sum of £2020. I remind you of these matters, lest they should slip your memory, as has occurred on some previous occasions; and as you will now be preparing your accounts for the annual audit of the College on the 10th proximo, it will doubtless be a satisfaction to you to have these matters settled by that date.

"Your obedient servants,
"PETERSON AND PAULSON.

"P.S.—Should you desire to see us on the matter, which we need scarcely remind you is of the greatest urgency, you will find Mr. Peterson here to-morrow (Thursday) afternoon between 4 and 5 o'clock."

"£2020 within three weeks," continued the Bursar, nervously running a shaky hand through his still luxuriant locks, "I don't

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know that we can count on 2020 pence; certainly not unless we submit to further reduce our incomes, or to plunge ourselves deeper into the mire with a fresh mortgage. Of course the Provost must be consulted in the matter; that is why I have asked him to come and see the accounts for himself; but he is a hasty man; his reforms were well intentioned, but there was no need to be in such a hurry with them."

A tap at the door and the Provost enters; little changed since the days of his Deanship, save for an extra greyness of the hair, and an extra pomposity of manner.

"Good morning, Bursar. I received your note, and have come to you as you wished," says he with mighty condescension.

"I am sorry to have troubled you, Provost, and I must apologise for asking you to see me here, and not at the Lodge; but it is a matter of finance which is very pressing, and all the books and papers are here. Will you read this, sir?" and he placed in the Provost's hand Mr. Peterson's letter.

"Hm! ha! £2020. Well, Bursar, is there any difficulty about this?"

"Unfortunately there is every difficulty, sir. We have not got the money, nor are we likely to have it within the specified time unless we are prepared to make the most unwelcome sacrifices."

"We will discuss the future presently; but first I must say, Mr. Bursar, that the financial affairs of the College have been of late years most unhappily conducted. These mortgages, I know, are liabilities of long standing, such as all colleges incur; but this heavy debt on the new buildings was a most unwise proceeding, hampering and dragging us down just when my reforms needed sound pecuniary support."

"Permit me to say, Mr. Provost, that I differ from you—respectfully, of course—but I differ *in toto*. My new buildings are acknowledged to be the most successful addition to the architectural beauties of the University that have been erected in the present century; enthusiasts visit Oxford simply to see them. Professor Ruskin has written a little book about them; I cannot understand a word of it, I confess; but it is beautifully bound, and I have committed to memory a few passages from it, which I quote with unfailing success to strangers as I show them over the buildings. There is *no* fault to be found with the new quadrangle. All that we have to do now is——"

"To pay for it," interrupted the Provost, sardonically.

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"That of course, sir," said the Bursar, with a somewhat sickly smile. "I was not about to say that. I was about to say what we have to do is to find men to live in its rooms. Our numbers are sadly low, and that is where I consider that your plans of reform have—have—well I will say scarcely come up to your own or my expectations. We have at your wish got rid of the passmen, that was a matter comparatively easy of accomplishment, but we have not hitherto replaced them by classmen."

"I fail to understand you, sir. All our undergraduates now are candidates for honours."

"But few, if any, obtain them. We may take our horses to the water, but we have signally failed to make them drink. We have not obtained a first-class in any school for two years, and the total list of our honours since the new regulation came into force is sadly below that of a corresponding period of the old régime."

"You can prove anything by statistics, everybody knows that; and how can we be expected to show well in the schools, crippled as we are by debt. We have only half our proper number of scholars, and the Fellows' incomes have been so reduced that they have all taken to 'coaching' private pupils, to the neglect of their College lectures. Good Heavens, Wagstaffe! what can have induced you to embark us in such reckless extravagance?"

"The new buildings have cost double the original estimates," murmured the Bursar feebly; "I didn't know it at the time, but I am now told it is always the way when you dabble in bricks and mortar."

"Dabble, sir! We are over head and ears in bricks and mortar; your bricks and your mortar, too, please to remember that."

"Then the agricultural depression, which I never anticipated, has depreciated all our farms; and as to our—our public-house property, of which I scarcely like to speak, its possession is so derogatory to a corporate body like ourselves——"

"It was left to us by a worthy and substantial benefactor, the uncle of the late Provost, and used to bring us in a worthy and substantial income; but ever since you conceived the unhappy idea of entrusting its management to young Lushington——"

"He knew more about public-houses than any of us."

"And is now, in consequence, an inmate of a retreat for dipsomaniacs at Clifton."

"We certainly had no idea when we appointed him that he was an agent for various firms of brewers and distillers, and

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would bind our unhappy tenants to sell nothing but beers and spirits of most indifferent quality, on which he obtained handsome commissions."

"It is useless to lament the past, Bursar. This sum of £2020 must be found within three weeks; what further reductions of income can we afford? The Fellows?"

"I fear, Provost, nothing further can be expected in that quarter. We have made a point of electing men from other colleges to our Fellowships, to avoid perpetuating the principles which obtained here under the late Provost; they are therefore sadly lacking in *esprit de corps*, and consider that in foregoing nearly half their incomes they have already made sufficient sacrifices for us."

"The scholars?"

"Under pretence of raising our standard of scholarship we have in the last few years voided half our elections, and reduced their numbers accordingly. To reduce the stipends we must make the fact public, and so advertise our bankrupt condition; besides, the amount so saved would be too small to be of real service to us."

"We had better see Peterson this afternoon, as he suggests in his postscript. What is the use of a solicitor if he cannot suggest some means of escape for us? We had better be prepared to stay the night in town; a single interview with Peterson may not settle the matter, and the sooner the business is concluded one way or the other the better."

"There is nothing for it, I fear, but a further mortgage to tide us over the difficulty, and even then the evil is only deferred. The final instalment of the new building debt is due at Christmas, and what prospect we have of meeting that——"

"By Christmas we shall have in hand the caution-money of the Freshmen who come into residence next October. Say thirty Freshmen at £30 apiece, that is nearly £1000, we should have no difficulty in making up the balance."

"Unfortunately we cannot count on thirty Freshmen next October or even twenty; there is a sad falling off in our numbers; if it continues at the present rate, in ten years more the College will be half empty."

"These numerical fluctuations will occur," said the Provost, with desperate cheerfulness, "when things are in a transition state as they are with us; at any rate, we have already effected a great improvement in the tone of the College; the noisy orgies

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of ten years ago are things of the past—those celebrations of boat-race successes——"

"Bump-suppers," suggested the Bursar.

"Quite so; I had forgotten the name. It is so long since one has taken place here."

"There has been no occasion for one" (nor had there—the College boat had long since found its way to the bottom of the river); "but there are two sides to that question, Mr. Provost. We no longer make a handsome profit, as we used to do in the days of bump-suppers, out of the kitchen; indeed, it barely pays its way; nor can I quite agree with you that we keep up the quality of our men. The great public schools seem in danger of forgetting our existence."

"The great public schools are over-rated institutions, sir, which we can very well afford to do without," quoth the Provost, stoutly, who was himself the product of a North-country grammar school, and looked it, every inch. "Would you have us return to the days of the late Provost? Would you have your oak screwed up, and fireworks on the grass-plot under your windows some three times a term? Lord Newmarket cracking a hunting-whip or blowing a post-horn in the small hours, and Mr. Charles Beaton teaching a pack of terriers to perform circus tricks in the Quad when he should have been attending my Divinity lecture? By the way, what evil fate has befallen that dreadful set, I wonder?"

"Newmarket started life at a very extravagant rate, as indeed we here do not require to be reminded. What with the Turf, cards, and, I believe, other ways of dissipating his substance, he was not long in reaching the end of his tether."

"Ah! gone utterly to the bad and lost sight of, I suppose. A sad thing for his family, but only to be expected by those who knew him in his youth."

"No, the odd thing is that when things seemed at their worst for him, he disappointed everybody's expectations, retrieved his fortune by marrying an American heiress, and then, as it appears so many young men of his class do now-a-days, went into trade."

"Indeed! Newmarket in trade! What! a livery stable-keeper, or a dog-fancier? I can imagine him nothing else."

"No," replied the Bursar with a slight blush, "he is a—a ready-money tailor, a large business in Oxford Street; indeed, I used to deal there myself at one time, and should do so now,

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but in these hard times of reduced Fellowships, ready-money payment is not always convenient, and on that point Newmarket is inflexible."

"You surprise me! And Mr. Beaton, what has become of that ne'er-do-weel?"

"When we expelled him some ten years ago, his father, who was then alive, sent him abroad to study foreign languages. Since old Colonel Beaton's death, I am told that the son has been seen in London in extremely indifferent society, 'Bohemian,' I believe it is called, such as writers, painters, and even actors."

"Ah! 'facilis descensus;' of one who began life by setting authority at defiance and screwing-up his betters, I could believe anything, even such associates as you speak of."

"Well, let us be off to town and settle the matter. We can catch the midday train, and we will telegraph to Peterson from the railway-station to expect us at 4 o'clock."

III.

Surely never did two potent, grave, and reverend Seigniors present sadder and sorrier appearance than did Peter Champneys, D.D., and Lewis Wagstaffe, M.A., when at some five in the afternoon they emerged from their conference with Mr. Peterson, of Peterson and Paulson, Solicitors, Lincoln's Inn Fields. Never since their undergraduate days had they received such a "wigging" as had been then and there administered to them by their legal adviser. What a memory the man had! What a head for figures! Why he remembered liabilities which the Bursar had clean forgotten, and of which the Provost had never heard; and arrears of interest accumulated beneath his recording pencil with a fatal rapidity which reminded the luckless Bursar of an ingenious arithmetical puzzle, based on the number of nails in a horse's shoe, wherewith he had in happier times been wont to beguile the five-o'clock tea-tables of Oxford bluestockings.

"Your College has, under your management," said the man of law, "been for years and years living beyond its income, and you have repeatedly incurred fresh liabilities which you had no reasonable expectation of discharging. The officials of the Bankruptcy Court had, only a few days ago, very harsh terms and very harsh proceedings also for an individual debtor who was guilty of such practices, and I fail to see that the case is materially altered by the fact of your being a corporate body. Indeed, if

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a joint stock company came before the Court under similar circumstances——"

"You surely, Mr. Peterson, would not compare the College over which I preside to a mushroom trading company. We are one of the most ancient foundations in the University of Oxford."

"I'm afraid, Dr. Champneys," replied the solicitor, "that the Court might consider that both in your corporate and individual capacity you are old enough to know better. Your property is mortgaged to at least its full value, farms, public-houses, suburban building-land, everything except the College buildings in Oxford themselves, which I dare not advise you to tamper with, and which, if I could, would scarcely present a valuable security to a mortgagee, especially as the College books are by no means as full of names as they should be." (Good Heavens! was there *anything* to their detriment which this man did *not* know.) "Should any one consent to advance what you require, you must be prepared to submit to somewhat onerous conditions; it would be a very speculative matter on the part of the lender."

"Unfortunately we are not in a position to make stipulations. Do you know any capitalist likely to assist us?"

"I certainly know one man who might do so, and I will make a point of seeing him to-night; if you will be here to-morrow morning at eleven o'clock, I may be able to tell you more. Flanders, show these gentlemen out, and bring me the papers in Lord Newmarket's patent case. By the way, his Lordship was at your College, was he not? A most enterprising nobleman with a perfect genius for trade; he is resisting by our advice an attempted infringement of his patent automatic brace and trouser-suspender, with a litigious spirit that does him immense credit. You must indeed be proud of such an 'alumnus.' Ah ha! *I* can turn a classic phrase at times, you see. Good day, gentlemen, till eleven o'clock to-morrow."

Sadly and disconsolately did Champneys the Provost, and Wagstaffe the Bursar, return to their hotel, where they had ordered dinner at the Academic hour of seven; fortunately for them that dinner was good, and the post-prandial bottle of port proved not unworthy of an Oxford Common Room. Somehow by the time the last glass of that bottle was reached, the world did not seem quite so dismal to either of them as it had appeared when they slunk from Mr. Peterson's awful presence; indeed, incredible as they would have thought it a couple of hours before,

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they found themselves discussing with some animation how they should pass the evening. To remain in the hotel was impossible; it was an old-fashioned house which the Provost had used on the rare occasions of his visits to town since his undergraduate days, and to spend the evening in its smoking-room or billiard-room was not to be thought of; while there was no drawing-room, and the waiter was already beginning in the coffee-room to lay a long table for a convivial supper-party of commercial travellers.

They must go out—but whither?

The waiter, pausing in the midst of his labours to come to their rescue, suggested a theatre.

"It is years," said the Provost, "since I visited a play-house; but I understand that the public taste has of late effected a marked improvement in dramatic amusements; shall we judge for ourselves? I do not mind confessing that my mind requires some relaxation after the tension it has suffered to-day."

"I too should be glad of something to take me out of myself; this newspaper which the waiter has brought me contains announcements of so many theatres, that I hardly know which to choose;—um!—nothing of Shakespeare's, I fear—there is a play here, I see, sir, with the title of 'University Intelligence;' I wonder what *that* is about?"

"Ah!—a funny play that is," said the waiter, "and if you comes from Oxford, as by your talk I reckon you do, it' ll make you laugh to rights; why we had a party of Oxford gents supping here last Saturday after they'd seed it. Lor! they did laugh sure*ly*, and imitate the actors and all. 'You rumpled 'is 'air, sir,' they'd say, and roar with laughter fit to bust."

"Rumpled his hair!" the phrase somehow seemed familiar to both Provost and Bursar, but they could neither of them remember where they had heard it.

"It's what they say in the play, sirs, I'm told; ain't seen it myself, 'cause I haven't had an evening out these two months, not since this play's been running. If you gents would like to go there, why the theatre's only round the corner, and 'Boots' would run and book your seats in a minute."

"What do you say, Wagstaffe?"

"My dear Provost, I say *anything* to prevent our dwelling on our own affairs. Let the 'Boots,' I beg, secure us a private box. That is, I believe, a part of the theatre where one can see without being seen."

"Boots" did his errand expeditiously, and within a quarter of

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an hour our two friends were duly ensconced in the dim recesses of a private box at the Paragon Theatre, awaiting the rising of the curtain.

"A new and original farcical comedy," read Mr. Wagstaffe from the programme, "entitled 'University *Intelligence*, or Lucus a non lucendo.' Our author professes a smattering of the classics, at any rate."

"Wagstaffe," quoth the Provost, "I believe we passed that young Beaton in the entrance-hall; he looked flourishing enough, but one can never judge by appearances."

"If he can afford to visit theatres every evening," says the Bursar, thinking ruefully of the cost of the private box, "he must indeed be flourishing; but hush! the curtain is going up."

* * * * *

Two hours later, dishevelled and distraught, they fled from the theatre a few minutes before the final fall of the curtain; nor were their emotions without due excuse, for to them during those two hours had been vouchsafed the power, that power for which the Scottish poet sighed in vain, to see themselves as others saw them; for "University Intelligence" was, as it were, a chapter from their own lives, a chapter ten years old, which they had been glad to forget themselves, and to imagine forgotten by others. And now by some devilish art of the dramatist they lived again the old life, with its bump-suppers! its screwings-up!! its fireworks!!! And not they only, no, that would have been bad enough; to make bad worse, the theatre was thronged with unfeeling crowds—"Philistines," the Bursar called them, "Probably from the large public schools to a man," added the Provost, though that could hardly be true of the occupants of pit and gallery—and by those unfeeling crowds were the misfortunes of the stage-Provost and the stage-Bursar received with most uproarious and unsympathetic mirth; no wonder that those unhappy men who had hoped to find in the Paragon Theatre "something to take them out of themselves," found no such thing. Silently and speedily they fled down the empty staircase, leaving the delighted audience still shrieking over the fiftieth repetition of the humorous catch-phrase, "You rumpled his hair, sir!" which now, when restored to its original context and surroundings, they recollected only too well.

In the entrance-hall again was Mr. Charles Beaton, sure

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enough, addressing in somewhat peremptory and authoritative style a minor official of the theatre. But his old Dons were in no mood to confront him now, they stole in somewhat undignified fashion through the swing-doors, nor paused till they stood on the pavement outside.

"Cab or carriage, sir?" says the linkman.

But from neither does he receive reply, for the Provost's emotion is too great for words, while the Bursar flings abroad, urbi et orbi, these broken words:

"Mr. Charles Beaton, indeed, Mr. Charles Beaton! who openly contemned my Logic lectures, and told me to my face that the great classic authors were not solely actuated by a desire to compile 'tips' for honours in the schools! And now the young fellow swaggers about here, looking as if the whole place belonged to him!"

"Young feller, indeed!" says the linkman, overhearing this outburst of an overburdened soul. "And why shouldn't he look as if the whole place belonged to him, *old* feller? Considering as how it does! That's my governor, Mr. Charles Beaton, manager of this 'ere theatre, and author of this 'ere play, 'University Intelligence,' as all London's 'a coming to see."

IV.

Notwithstanding an indifferent night and a worse than indifferent breakfast, the eleven o'clock appointment with Mr. Peterson was punctually observed.

"Will you kindly step in here, gentlemen?" says Flanders, the head clerk; "Mr. Peterson is busy with Lord Newmarket about his patent braces; but he'll be with you immediately," and Flanders ushers the unresisting Dons into a waiting-room, and closes the door.

Another client is in the room, at sight of whom both Provost and Bursar stand aghast, for it is none other than our old friend Charlie Beaton, who, rising cheerful and unabashed as of yore, greets his quondam preceptors with at least the outward semblance of respectful effusion.

"My dear Dr. Champneys, my excellent Mr. Wagstaffe, this is indeed a pleasure, not altogether unexpected on my part, for our friend Mr. Peterson had prepared me for it. And what news of the old College?"

The two Dons exchanged looks, which plainly said, "the

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presence of this young man is undesirable, we must get rid of him."

"Mr. Beaton," said the Provost at last, with some hesitation, "do not let us detain you. *We* are here on business."

"My dear Dr. Champneys," replied Charlie suavely, "most people *do* visit their solicitors on business. You are not detaining me, I assure you, for I also am here on business. I don't pay morning calls to Mr. Peterson at six-and-eight pence apiece for my amusement."

"What, sir!" cried the Provost, "are you here to borrow money? I am sorry to see this, sorry that the downward course begun so many years ago with the excesses of your undergraduate career——"

"Stop! stop! Dr. Champneys, you are not in your Common Room now, so you can spare your indignation; besides, I'm not here to borrow money, what can have put such an idea into your head? No, things are prospering with me; I'm more in a position to lend than to borrow, were I so disposed. Indeed, I am here at Mr. Peterson's request, to see some unhappy clients of his who have been spending money too freely, exceeding their income. A foolish business, gentlemen; I always think how our old Provost, now dead and gone, used to warn us against debt; a kindly old fellow was the late Provost, though he did send me down for 'rumpling an exhibitioner's hair;' well, I can afford to forgive him now, and after all, I suspect my banishment was little enough of *his* doing. Eh! gentlemen?"

Neither the Provost nor the Bursar appeared ready to throw any light on the subject, while both looked supremely uncomfortable.

"Well, gentlemen, if you have business here I will leave you. My 'middle-aged spendthrifts' (so they are described to me) have failed to put in an appearance, and I can't afford to waste my morning. I'm a busy man now: so good-day," and Charlie Beaton caught up his hat and made for the door.

"Stop! Mr. Beaton," cried both his former preceptors in agonized entreaty, "don't go; we are here."

"So I perceive."

"We've come to see *you*. We are the—the——"

"Not the 'middle-aged spendthrifts'? Can it be? 'Heu pietas! heu prisca fides!' and all the rest of it. I've not quite forgotten my Latin, you see. Well! let's get to business, I have a rehearsal at twelve o'clock. What can I do for you?"

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"The College, Mr. Beaton, requires, most urgently requires an advance——"

"Ah! Mr. Paterson gave me a memorandum—'£2020 by the 24th inst.' What can the poor old College have been spending such sums on? Not bump-suppers and fireworks? But the security, gentlemen, that is the main question. Ah! here is Mr. Peterson, and Lord Newmarket with him. Good, now we can go into the matter thoroughly; you know Newmarket? I thought so; 'Doth not a meeting like this make amends!' Lord Newmarket acts with me in this matter. You can speak freely before him. Now, Mr. Wagstaffe, my time is precious; your security?"

"The College farms."

"Mortgaged already for more than they are worth, to my knowledge."

"The building estate at Rochampton."

"Jerry-built villas, not a third of which are occupied; Mr. Peterson can correct me if I am misinformed."

Mr. Peterson's gesture in response was as full of meaning as Lord Burleigh's nod, but it conveyed no comfort to the despairing Bursar.

"The—the—I never like to speak of it. . . it is so unacademic—but the public-house property."

"Heavily mortgaged, and, moreover, hopelessly mismanaged, not bringing in a tithe of its value; again I speak subject to correction." But no correction came.

"What else?" queried the relentless Charlie.

"Beyond that, we have nothing except the College buildings and their contents, the pictures, the plate, and—and the cellars now, alas! sadly impoverished."

"And with those," added Mr. Peterson, "I dare not advise the College authorities to deal. I fear such a course would be *ultra vires!*"

"Quite so, Mr. Peterson. Lord Newmarket and I desire to do nothing without your approval. It strikes me that to advance £2000 and upwards on such security would be very like making you gentlemen a present of it. Still, out of regard for our old College, which we consider to have been brought to its present unfortunate condition solely by the mismanagement of yourselves, we are willing to advance to it the required sum, upon certain conditions."

"And they are?"

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"That you make over to us the sole management of your public-house property, which can, I think, be in time converted into a source of revenue by the refreshment contractor of my theatre, who is a man I can trust not to tamper with his own samples as Mr. Lushington did—you needn't blush, Newmarket, it's the truth I'm telling, and my bars bring in double what they did before you undertook the catering—and, moreover, that you two gentlemen sign an undertaking to accept any ecclesiastical preferment of the value of £500 a year or upwards, which may be offered you within the next three months, and thereupon to vacate your present appointments. Mr. Peterson approves these conditions, and has prepared the requisite documents. Your decision, of course, cannot be delayed: you can let me know it between now and the 24th; in the meantime the money is ready for you as soon as you make a favourable reply to our proposals. Good morning, I never keep my rehearsals waiting. Newmarket, can you come with me; those liveries you have made me for the new play are all wrong; come and see to them yourself—there's not one of your men who can touch you at fitting a coat."

* * * * *

[From a Society paper some three weeks later.]

"When Academic Oxford reassembles after the present Long Vacation it will miss two of its most prominent and honoured members. The Rev. Peter Champneys, D.D., Provost of St. Blaize College, vacates that post, having accepted the valuable City living of St. Simon Stylites, in the gift of the Earl of Newmarket. The same nobleman has also recommended the Rev. Lewis Wagstaffe, M.A., Bursar of the same College, for the Chaplaincy of the Button Makers' Company, of which his Lordship is the Master, and we understand that at a Court of the Company held yesterday, Mr. Wagstaffe was unanimously elected to the post. The Earl of Newmarket was himself, some ten years ago, one of the most respected undergraduate members of St. Blaize College, and has by these appointments borne gratifying testimony to the *entente cordiale* existing between himself and his old tutors."

* * * * *

[From the same paper—some three months later still.]

"The Rev. Reginald Strongi'th'arm, M.A., Rector of Turfington, and Domestic Chaplain to the Earl of Newmarket, has been elected Provost of St. Blaize College, Oxford, in succession to the

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Rev. Peter Champneys, D.D. Mr. Strongi'th'arm, who was an undergraduate, and subsequently a Fellow of St. Blaize College in its palmier days, some ten or fifteen years since, was distinguished not only as a scholar (First Class Moderations, First Class Literæ Humaniores, and Ireland Scholarship), but also as an excellent oarsman and cricketer, and it may confidently be hoped that under his guidance the College may speedily regain that supremacy, both in "the schools" and in athletic pursuits, to which of late it has been so utterly and unaccountably a stranger."

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TWO BROTHERS AND THEIR FRIENDS.

THE DE GONCOURTS.

SOME shrewd observer of French nature once observed—"In France all is allowed to die and pass away, save the dead," and rarely was truer word spoken. Yet there has not often been, even in France, such fidelity shown to a vanished personality, fidelity in thought, word, and deed, as that of Edmond de Goncourt to his younger brother and fellow-worker, Jules, the gifted, wayward *cadet* before whom the elder was, and is, ever ready to efface himself, even to belittling his own power and literary genius by the oft-repeated declaration, only applicable, alas! to the earlier volumes bearing his name, that anything worthy in form and expression was due to his *collaborateur*, and anything unacceptable to himself.

Though this is far from being the truth, it cannot be denied that since Jules' death a certain quality has disappeared from what is still styled, by common consent, "l'œuvre des de Goncourt," a vigour and picturesque force of expression, and above all the exquisite prose poetry of description noticeable in such works as 'Renée Maupevin,' and in 'Marie Antoinette,' which is perhaps at once the most ideal and real presentment of Louis XVI.'s queen ever evolved in modern days, and which will certainly remain the most remarkable volume in the two writers' elaborate reconstruction of the 18th century.

"Cœlio était la bonne partie de moi-même," says De Musset's Octave in 'Les Caprices de Marianne.' "Elle est remontée au ciel avec lui," and he adds, "Je ne sais point aimer, Cœlio seul le savait," and so might speak with truth Edmond de Goncourt of his brother and himself.

Be that as it may, Jules had a strange power of drawing affection to himself; all rejoiced in his coming, and sorrowed when

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he went, from the old family servants, who exclaimed, "Nous allons rire ce soir, Monsieur Jules vient dîner," to the children, who found in him such a delightful playmate, and to whom we owe one of the most charming letters recorded in the child-correspondence of the world. The two brothers had a tender friendship for four little girls, daughters of their friend Camille Maveille, who lived near Chartres, in a house full of roses and eighteenth-century pictures; and these small people wrote a letter in common, a sort of joint Round Robin, in paragraphs divided by a touching refrain, as follows:—

"Ah, Monsieur Jules! Ah, Monsieur Jules! How sad we are, how sad we are! Juliette is sad, Margaret is sad, Naco is sad; so is my aunt, so is Clementine, Mirga and Nounou. It is the saddest of sadness! Ah, Monsieur Jules!"

"No more hide and seek, no more blindman's buff, no walks, no doll's baptisms, neither sweetmeats, nor tarts *à vingt et un*." (!)

"One curé comes to call; two curés come to call; *three* curés come to call. Ah, Monsieur Jules!"

"We are working all day; we listen for you in vain, and while we prick up one ear, four ears, six ears, eight ears, the inkstand falls to the ground, the copy-book tumbles on to the inkstand, and tears drop from our eyes. Ah, Monsieur Jules!"

"Our roast veal is without charm and lacks mushrooms! We don't sleep, we kick, we fall out of bed, and we dream dictation. Ah, Monsieur Jules!"

And so on through a whimsical and untranslatable letter.

And yet one cannot help wondering whether, after all, in spite of the many friendships and good things brought them by their talent and way of life, the younger at least of the De Goncourts would not have been happier leading the regular quiet existence of the average Frenchman. The following letter addressed to one of his early friends, Louis Parry, gives a curious insight into the mind of one destined afterwards to play such a *rôle* in modern French literature.

"I am sincerely grateful for your advice upon the necessity of taking up a career. I will only say that your exhortations, conjointly with those of my Uncle Jules de Courmont, come a little too late. My resolution is quite fixed and nothing will make me change it, neither sermons nor counsels, not even yours, who have for me so great a friendship. . . . I know that I thus run the gauntlet of continuous moral remonstrances from members of my family who are willing to assume

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the responsibility of my happiness by shutting me up in one of those cupboards devoted to the reckoning up of figures and the copying of letters, which are the conventional resource of all the young men of my social position. But what will you have? I am without ambition. I am a monster, but so it is. The most splendid and best paid place in the world I would not accept, if offered. So far as I am concerned, I consider that those public employments which are so sought after and so over-burdened with applicants, are not worth stooping one's spine to obtain. This is my opinion, and as the matter concerns myself, I have a right to hold to it.

"Oh! I know well how you will reply: 'But all the world does something.' My family will say the same thing: 'Look at all the rest.' But is this a really serious argument? It is exactly as if one tried to dress everybody, little or big, crooked or straightly made, in clothes cut the same size. So-and-so adores adding up; his soul expands before columns of figures; he is happy warming himself at a stove; he reads nothing but newspapers, and all pictures are for him just so many sign-boards. His family say to him 'go in and work without pay.' Another has literary tastes, loves painting and all the arts; adding up numbers give him cramp in the stomach, he never when at college could cut any figure in arithmetic; never mind, his family say to him also, 'Go and be a fifth wheel in a Government office.' Sometimes they don't even consult him.

"You will answer that I should find the Foreign Office more tolerable. Very good; for that one must have recommendations, and I have only one uncle to fall back upon, which uncle is too honest ever to have been able to get anything for his family. However, let us take for granted that I am named Attaché in an Embassy. But, my dear fellow, I had rather be transported right away. I will get you Eduard Lefebure's letters to read; and you'll see how he enjoys himself!

"Then you will overwhelm me with the antique anathema, 'Lazzarone, sad is the life which you are going in for;—Lazzarone!'"

With the exception of a few light passages, and the happiness which comes to every true artist with the consciousness of good work done, even if it be unappreciated by his public, Jules de Goncourt's life seems to have been full of sad disillusions and disappointments, for it was not till just before his death, 1870, that the De Goncourts were acknowledged masters in the art they had professed so long. True they but shared the fate of several who have now come out victorious after years of obscurity, or at least doubtful notoriety; Emile Zola, Alphonse Daudet, &c., but Jules had not their staying power, and died just as fame was approaching the group of whom he had been perhaps the most delicately gifted and clear-visioned—for much of the

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De Goncourts' early works are but precursors of what now composes modern French literature.

Across the pages of the journal, kept day by day by the two brothers, Jules, it seems, oftener holding the pen, flit the varied personalities which composed the advanced section of the literary Paris of their day. Emile Augier, Octave Feuillet, About, in a word the world of the Academy, are conspicuous by their absence; but on the other hand George Sand, Victor Hugo, Flaubert, Théophile Gautier, and Sainte-Beuve are made to live before us with an almost painful reality, not as they posed for *le commun des fidèles*, or would have sat for their portraits for posterity, but as they appeared in daily *déshabillé* to the shrewd un-idealising eyes of two keen observers, with whom *le vrai* had become almost a mania, and yet who could sometimes pay a noble tribute to rival talent or reputation, as witness Jules de Goncourt's fine untranslatable words on Heine, an epitaph summing up admirably the poet and those he left albeit *peu tendre*.

"Henri Heine est mort. C'est une grande mort. Mieux eut valu dans la fosse tout le cortège—que le cortegé. Je n'aperçois que des nains pour tendre l'Arc d'Ulysse."

The great painter of Parisian manners, Gavarni, was perhaps one of the most intimate friends ever cherished by the De Goncourts; their references to him are many, and he may be said to have been their literary and artistic godfather; till the end of his life he remained closely knit to them, and perhaps the only faithful though unfortunately little known early portrait of the brothers De Goncourt was due to his pencil. The drawing shows us two young men sitting by one another sideways in profile, then a favourite way of painting or drawing two people; Jules, even then looking worn and thin, has his hair *à la Byron*, and has his coat cut according to the last mode of '56. Both brothers have the *effilé* refined look common to members of the old French *noblesse* from which they sprang, and they look strangely out of place in this album, heading the series of certain noted journalists of the day; and yet Gavarni had thought to do them great honour in placing them there.

Gavarni himself was one of the quaintest types the authors came across; it was to his maternal uncle Guillaume Thiemet that he owed both his Christian name and his extraordinary talent. Thiemet was the Toole, the Corney Grain, and the Cruikshank of the latter end of the eighteenth century; inexhaustible as a mimic and comic artist.

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Gavarni's father was an old revolutionary republican, considerably disgusted with the men of his time, but loyal to his old convictions. The son got his lessons at the house of an architect whose wife was generally reading the romances of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe; —the Miss Braddon of a hundred years ago. Gavarni early began to get his pocket-money by selling little sepia sketches to a Demoiselle Naudet, a poor picture-dealer on what was then the Place du Carrousel, and she introduced his work to Blaisot, an art publisher of the first year of the Restoration, who ordered *sets of Devils*. The "Devils" were grotesques somewhat similar to the diabolic adornments of an old Cathedral, and resembles the group of his contemporaries—insect devils, feathered devils, devils in pig-tailed perukes. These personages, however, not sufficing to gain the required income, he took to engraving.

In 1830 he is described by Gautier as having been a charming young man with curly hair, and "as particular as an Englishman" about his dress, for he was beginning to earn enough to satisfy his fantasies of costume; and in 1832 he was in full swing, and published his 'Physiognomies de la Population de Paris'; the people, the soldiers, the children, the fishwives, the policemen, the *Parisiennes*, *grandes dames* and *bourgeoises*, indoor and out, in curl-papers and in ball dresses, yawning, laughing, asleep, awake, the *bourgeois gentilshommes*, and the *gentilshommes bourgeois*, the vagabonds making oratorical *poses* in the police court, etc. Gavarni seized them all, and his fame spread far and wide.

In 1847 he came to London, where he seems to have been quite anxiously expected. At that time our social links with Paris were very close. But in England he did not get on very well; though he was most intelligently interested in London. He snubbed Thackeray, who came full of zeal to invite him to dinner; he actually missed, without any excuse, an appointment to sketch the Queen, who in common with Prince Albert had the highest admiration for his genius; he was further—horrid thought!—said to have declared that an English lady in full dress was like a Cathedral; and finally he went off at a tangent on scientific notions, and, although the most sober of men, took what the de Goncourts whimsically call "le gin du pays," to stimulate his researches into the higher mathematics! It was high time for him to get back to France, after an absence of something like two years, during which time the Orleans monarchy had been replaced by the Republic and the Prince

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President. It was at the end of 1851 that the two young de Goncourts first saw Gavarni and found him deep in water-colour painting and Cartesian Philosophy. He took to them with great kindness, told them of all his adventures, and initiated them into all his theories and ideals, apparently believing in nothing but mathematics, essaying in vain to wring out the answer of the universe from what he called "the music of numbers." In fact, after the death of his favourite son, the little Jean constantly referred to in Jules de Goncourt's correspondence, his intellect took an extraordinary turn; he would discourse on scholastic philosophy, and Louis Veuillot, by no means with disapproval. It seemed to be the only train of thought on which his mind could dwell with interest, if not with belief.

He lived until November 1866, in a sad strange old age which his remaining son Pierre seemed unable to brighten; the last time he was seen by the De Goncourts he was "mathematiquant" in the middle of a heap of books. He left behind him ten thousand drawings, the manifold pieces of the *Œuvre*, by which he had delighted France for nearly half a century; but he had outlived his popularity, and was sincerely mourned by none save the two young *littérateurs* to whom he had proved so good a friend.

It was Gavarni who with Sainte-Beuve inaugurated the *dîners Magny*. Here, twice a month, a group of literary men, comprising, as time went on, all the De Goncourts' familiars, met and dined "à la bonne franquette," discussing freely one another and those outside the charmed circle, little knowing or recking that they were making future "copy," or at least furnishing materials for the most curious memoirs ever published in France, if we except some of the mediæval journals and diaries, which, after all, though equally frank, were not published during the lifetime of their authors, or at least of those mentioned in their pages with praise or blame.

Lightly posed, and yet sketched with no uncertain hand, the band of men and women who built up and "invented," to translate an expressive French idiom, what will go down as modern French literature, pass before us. Flaubert, who spent four years in writing one short novel, and that novel 'Salammbo'; and who in the intervals of hard silent work would sit on a divan, his feet crossed Turkish fashion, confiding to all and any who would listen the plot and incidents of a study of modern

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Eastern life—destined never to be even begun by him—or again throwing aside the eternal cigarette, from whose curling spiral of smoke he pretended to evolve the strange fantasies which lent to his conversation such curious charm, in order to dance a grotesque *pas seul*, dubbed by its originator "l'Idiot des Salons," and apparently intended to be taken as a monstrous parody of the respectable bourgeois smugness which the author of 'Madame Bovary' and his colleagues so abhorred.

We catch glimpses of a young struggling Zola at Magny's, where his undoubted genius and strange power seems to have been an accepted fact long before his work had even acquired the notoriety which in France so often precedes fame. In those days the Apostle of Realism was a sallow wiry *jeune*, writing newspaper articles to keep body and soul together, while elaborating the finest novels of the Rougon Macquart series. But the chief of the party was Théophile Gautier, the most powerful and self-assertive of them all, never so happy apparently as when engaged in loud discussion with Sainte-Beuve or Taine on the merits or demerits of their respective gods, Balzac, Homer, and Racine, yet devoted to the two pretty young daughters who kept house for him in the sombre ill-furnished house at Neuilly. There the "Sultan de l'Epithète," as some one happily designated him, spent his idle hours. His work he did in the offices of the *Moniteur*, seeming only able to write under the impulsion of knowing that a printer's devil lay in wait round every corner, and seeing, as he wrote, the "copy" come back in proof line by line, for in no other fashion would or did the great critic ever produce his articles.

One fine day, early in the sixties, the brothers received a card inviting them to assist at a "petite fête de famille," to take place in Mdlle. Gautier's own rooms. There they find some thirty guests assembled in front of a miniature stage, of which the youthful Puvis de Chavannes, to-day President of the Second Salon, has been the zealous scene-painter. The piece played is entitled 'Pierrot Posthume,' in France an ever-new theme. Judith, the eldest of the three children, and with even then a strange delight in Oriental lore, looks graceful as Esmeralda; Estelle is a dainty Harlequin; their brother a somewhat solemn Pierrot—perhaps a thought *too* posthume, some friend remarks—and Théophile Gautier himself marvellously plays Pantaloon, the youngest, merriest, wittiest of them all, and throwing himself with abundant zeal into the fun.

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One evening, Tourguenieff is welcomed, an honoured guest, by the Magny diners—

"He looks like a gentle giant with his white hair . . . and his eyes have borrowed some of the soft bright blue of the sky. . . Touched perhaps by our greeting, he begins to talk of Russian literature, which he declares to be drifting towards realism, both as regards fiction and the Theatre. He tells us that the Russians are great readers of reviews, and seems ashamed of owning that he and some ten others are actually paid 600 fr. the page. On the other hand, a book only brings in about 4000 fr.;" and he goes on to say that there is but one foreign writer popular in Russia, and that is—Dickens. How the world has changed!

Neither of the brothers ever became intimate with George Sand, though she had a sincere admiration for their work. Introduced to this famous lady *confrère* by the engraver Manceau, their first impression was curiously unpleasant.

"A seated shadow, who remains apparently unconscious of our presence and salutations. . . Madame Sand has an automatic air, she speaks in a monotonous and mechanical voice which is never raised or lowered in tone. . . " Manceau, who apparently considered the authoress of 'La Mare au Diable' a kind of show, which perhaps explained her attitude, informs the de Goncourts that her powers of work are prodigious, and that nothing disturbs her. "Yes," says Madame Sand, "there is nothing praiseworthy in that, for writing has always been very easy to me."

And later on comes an account of a visit to Nohant, given by Gautier at one of the Magny dinners, and which gives a curious side-light on George Sand's home life.

"The food was good, but we had too much game and poultry, also Madame Calamatta and Alexander Dumas *fils*. . . Lunch is at ten o'clock. . . Madame Sand walks in, looking like the Somnambula, and remains sleepy through the whole meal . . . then we went into the garden, and this woke her up somewhat. We had some general conversation about the way in which certain words should be pronounced—*ailleurs* and *meilleur*, for instance. . . Not a word touching on the relation of the sexes; you would probably be shown the door if you dared to allude to such a thing. . . At three o'clock Madame Sand sets to her "copy" again till six. Dinner is hurried through in order to give Marie Caillot time to dine—she is the maid-servant, a *petite Fadette* adopted by Mme. Sand. . . After dinner Mme. Sand

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plays 'patience' till midnight without saying a word. . . Well, after a day or two I could stand it no longer, and so suddenly declared that Rousseau had been the worst writer the world had known, and this produced a discussion which lasted till one o'clock in the morning."

Certainly her malicious *confrère* knew how to avenge the dull hours George Sand had made him spend in her beloved Nohant, and yet at that time ('62) the 'Marquis de Villemer' was still unwritten, proving what a latent power there must have been in this quiet somnolent woman.

Through all these curious volumes, full of a painful disillusionment which intensifies as time goes on, stripping bare first both brothers and then the remaining one, of the natural affections and beliefs common to us all, one gracious and charming personality flits to and fro, ever bringing an element of brightness and cheery kindness into the lives of all those around. The Princess Mathilde Bonaparte, to whom constant references are made in the "Journal des Goncourt," seems to have played the part of fairy godmother to French men of letters during the Third Empire; indeed it was admittedly due to her influence that such men as Flaubert, Gautier, the De Goncourts, not to mention Sainte-Beuve, threw what influence they possessed all on the side of what was then Law and Order.

On one occasion, however, Princess Mathilde's friendship did the brothers an evil turn. 'Henriette Maréchal,' a strangely unequal play, but one which undoubtedly foreshadowed the modern dramatic school, and brought out, as none of their previous work had done, the rare powers of modern psychological observation possessed by the two authors, was blackballed by the Comédie Française; ostensibly on account of the subject —certainly a singularly unpleasant one—but more probably because with Emile Augier, Dumas *fils*, and Octave Feuillet, to say nothing of De Musset, the Théâtre Française was rather suffering from *embarras de richesses*, and had no desire for eccentric and startling additions to its repertoire.

Suddenly a message from the Emperor led the Comédie to reconsider its decision, 'Henriette Maréchal' was put into rehearsal, with the best actors and actresses of the day in the principal *rôles*, and MM. de Goncourt had nothing left but to express their gratitude to their energetic and all-powerful friend at Court. But it had gone forth in the Student's quarter that a dull ill-constructed play was going to be played at the

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National Theatre, in order to please a Princess; the Quartier Latin descended on the Palais Royal with whistles, rattles, and, what was more to the purpose, some fifty strong young voices determined to howl down the official play. The ringleader, a young gentleman known as *Pipe en bois*, wrote a witty epistle to the authors of the piece, which somehow got into all the anti-governmental organs, and practically obliged the Director of the Comédie Française to withdraw 'Henriette Maréchal.' This, after Got, Delaunay, Mme. Arnould Duplesis, &c., had five times tried in vain to make the public at least hear their play, which was spoken of with admiration and even enthusiasm by the leading critics of the day, including two such different men as Jules Janin and Gautier.

Some twenty years later the same public, grown presumably older and wiser under the beneficent influence of the Republic, applauded 'Henriette Maréchal' to the echo; but only one of the two authors was present to enjoy the triumph, and receive the congratulations of friends and critics. Such are the ironies of fate; for it is recognized that Jules de Goncourt had given some of his best thought to this comedy, if it can be so styled, containing as it does the *mot profond* which sums up what the whole of modern literature from Balzac downwards is always trying to express. In "Henriette Maréchal," the hero Paul de Breville says: "Çà finit donc l'amour, Louise?" but no answer is vouchsafed to the question.

Even before Jules' death there had been question of what one must call, for want of a better name, an Académie de Goncourt. The brothers ever retained a vivid remembrance of their own early struggles, and of those of their friends who, even more unfortunate than themselves, saw themselves absolutely obliged to "potboil," if I may be pardoned the phrase, in order to live while masterpieces slumbered in their brains. It was with the generous hope of helping forward some of these that the De Goncourts made up their minds to found a certain number of literary scholarships for which only *bonâ fide* men of letters should be eligible. The number was restricted to twelve, partly on account of the expense; and the scheme can only come into operation after the surviving brother has departed this world—a rather melancholy thought, by-the-bye, for those who have already a destined place in the Académie. When the brothers first conceived the idea, the men were chosen—all, it is hardly necessary to state, outside the Académie Française, and all men

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to whom the six thousand francs income (exactly £240) would have been wealth. These men were then Flaubert, Théophile Gautier, Barbey d'Hervilly, Louis Veuillot—for whose talent, strange as it may seem, considering the extreme differences both of opinion and style existing between them, the De Goncourts had a great respect—Theodore de Banville, and, among the younger men, Alphonse Daudet and Emile Zola. Of these the older generation has disappeared as though it had not been, and M. Zola is in training for the Académie, so to Alphonse Daudet will probably fall the task of forming the Académie de Goncourt, which may in time become a serious a rival to the Forty. It is difficult to divine who would now compose the twelve, but Guy de Maupassant may almost certainly be cited, the more so that he has always refused to enter the Academic fold. Paul Marguerite and Reny among the new writers would also probably have their place.

It is unnecessary to point out what a boon this Académie de Goncourt will prove, if the management and general direction fall into the right hands. Life is almost impossible to the literary beginner abroad. Magazines are practically non-existent, and, owing to the absence of good circulating libraries, it takes as many years to become popular in France as it would months in England or America.

One of the finest collections of Japanese art in the world is contained in the Auteuil villa where M. Edmond de Goncourt now lives in solitude, and the walls of this maison d'artiste are covered with exquisite eighteenth-century miniatures, drawings and pastels signed Fragouard, Boucher, Watteau, and rare Beauvais tapestries, to say nothing of the quaint, ill-spelt autograph letters of the *grandes dames* Messieurs de Goncourt made to live again in their 'Histoire de la France au 18ème Siècle,' for both brothers were passionate collectors at a time when a Fragouard worth three thousand francs to-day could be bought for as many centimes.

Very characteristic of the genius and aptitudes of the de Goncourts is the account of their home at Auteuil written by the elder brother ten long years after the death of Jules. Surely the plaques, and the bronzes, and the Japanese stuffs must one and all have caught the echoes of that sad death-bed, and the lonely pain of the survivor. There is something horribly melancholy in the enumeration of all the precious things, especially when we remember that after a particularly costly purchase the two young brothers would go off and economise in some artists' tavern

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where their food and lodging came to half-a-crown a day. Here is Edmond's account of the growth of this hereditary passion.

"Sitting by my chimney-corner, in the interval of work, a cigar between my lips and my eyes wandering over all the surrounding bric-a-brac, I had often asked myself whence arose this passionate love *du bibelot* which has made me happy and miserable all my life. . . .

"One of the most eager amateurs of the eighteenth century was a connection of my family, M. le Bas de Courmont, but he," adds Edmond, "was not a blood relation." The grandfather De Goncourt lived in a beautiful sculptured house at Neufchateau, and had within it divers bronzes, drawings, and fine pieces of furniture; but simple as the fitting adornment of his rank in life. The father, an officer, never troubled his head about 'these stupidities,' but always chose articles of common necessity, such as a brush of elegant and even artistic make, and his drinking-glass was one of the first *verres mousselins* made.

But it is to the influence of an aunt by marriage that M. de Goncourt attributes the collecting passion which grew with his growth. This lady lived at Croissy, in the neighbourhood of Paris, and Madame de Goncourt sometimes spent the summer with her and a third relative, a sort of domestic colony very common in France. They would set out on the Sunday afternoons when the little Edmond came home from school, and find their way down the Boulevard Beaumarchais to the Faubourg St. Antoine, and so to certain vendors of curiosities. This was about 1836, and the three ladies are daintily described in their thin muslin gowns, and prunella shoes with curved sandals tied round the ankle, "a charming trio." "Ma tante," says M. de Goncourt, "was at that time one of the four or five persons in Paris who loved the old things of a former time; Venetian glass, sculptured ivories, inlaid furniture, Genoese velvets, Point d'Alençon and Porcelaines de Saxe. The ladies would find the dealer putting up his shutters previous to going out to dine in some tavern at Vincennes, but they would generally pick up some precious trifle that was given to Edmond to carry, who watched his own feet with careful zeal lest he should trip, while his aunt would look smilingly back with an 'Edmond, take care not to break it.'

"It is certainly these old Sundays which made the *bibeloteur* which I have been, which I am, and shall be all my life long."

These pages recall the house of Victor Hugo at Guernsey, Hauteville House, which was decorated to such an extraordinary

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degree with old tapestry, sculptured oak and Japanese treasures, that it seemed to detract a little from the value of the dwelling as an exponent of the life of the man. A perfect furnished house is surely the growth of years.

From a charming description of a bedroom entirely furnished with relics of the eighteenth century, of which the bed is said to have been that of the unfortunate Princess de Lamballe, when visiting her father-in-law the Duc de Penthievre, I take this account of an inlaid casket, made of foreign woods, such as they loved a century ago.

"It is the casket where my grandmother, elegant in her tastes, kept her best Indian cashmeres; for she had so many, that I remember at the time of her death my childish astonishment at hearing the dealers who came to the sale speak of it as the 'sale of the Indian lady.' At this date all that remains in the casket belonging to its original owner is a curious account-book of the time of the Directoire, at the moment of the depreciation of the paper money—the Assignats—during months when a turkey cost 600 francs. This account-book is in the midst of a pile of literary agreements, shares and bonds, paid bills for works of art, family papers, all the mass of serious archives belonging to the living man, mingled with the relics which he keeps of those who are no more; where my fingers touch, now my father's 'Croix d'Officier,' now my mother's wedding-ring, or a fair-haired curl of my little sister Lili, who died of cholera in 1832—died upon our knees in a compartment of a diligence, whilst we were in agonising uncertainty whether to alight in one of the passing villages, or to hurry on for help to the next great town."

The great charm of the "Maison d'Artiste" consists in the little interspersed memories of family life which cling to some unbought relic of the De Goncourt family—memories in which the essentially delicate and kindly nature of the writer dignifies each reminiscence of the past, and makes every reader feel in him a friend.

MARIE ADELAIDE BELLOC.

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SCENES IN RUSSIA.

BY ANDRÉE HOPE.

PART I.

"KEEP the woman off! Hold her tight, I've got the little brute," called out a tall, handsome lad, as he carried into the yard a tiny white-haired dog.

"By the blood of the blessed saints, Alexis Alexandrovitch, spare the little creature!" shrieked a young woman, who was struggling desperately to free herself from the detaining grasp of several rough boys, or rather young men, who were holding her near the yard door. "Forgive me, only forgive me this time, and I'll kiss you whenever you ask, but for the Blessed Virgin's sake don't hurt poor little Luki, he never did you any harm!"

Here the poor soul's voice died away in the passion of her tears and sobs. She sank in a heap on the ground, feeling how impotent she was to resist her captors. She could but stretch forth her hands in one last effort of piteous appeal.

"Your promises come a little too late, my good Marfa. Now you and your Luki are going to be made a little example of."

As the young fellow spoke, so venomous a smile curled around his lips that the handsome face became absolutely diabolic in expression. He was fastening a steel collar round the little dog's neck, then tightening it, he slipped through the ring a strong and heavy chain. The poor animal, all unconscious of the evil to come, licked its executioner's hand; but no sentiment of pity was awakened in that cruel breast. The young ruffian attached one end of the chain to a staple in the wall, securing the other to a stout stake fixed in the ground. A pile of faggots had been laid between the staple and the stake, on which the little victim was placed. Then the inhuman wretch set fire to the faggots. In an instant they were in a blaze, and the long hair of the dog was blazing also. The tortured creature rushed from side to side in its frantic efforts to escape, but in vain, it was too solidly secured

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to its place of martyrdom. Its yells of anguish rose high into the air, exceeding even the shrieks of its miserable mistress; but louder than all was the savage laughter of the spectators, as they gleefully watched the agonies of the helpless and innocent little creature.

At length the tortured animal, in one supreme and convulsive throe, wrenched the stake from its holding, and falling backwards at some distance from the flames, lay scorched and panting upon the ground, motionless, but still alive.

Its inhuman persecutor approached it again, but with no intention of putting an end to its pain. No, he was only about to kick it back among the still burning mass of embers, when a young girl came flying down the great flight of steps leading from the villa. Furious anger brightened her eyes and crimsoned her cheeks with excitement. Like an avenging angel she came rushing down those steps, and without a moment's pause she raised a whip she carried in her hand, and struck the boy so resolutely across the face, that the scathing sharpness of the cut made him stagger back a few paces, while it raised a long red wheal across his cheek.

"You wretch! you coward!" cried the girl, in a voice expressing as much contempt as anger. "You call yourself a man, and yet you can torture a poor dog! You are a coward, Alexis Alexandrovitch, and I despise as much as I hate you! Oh you poor, poor little creature, the darling little thing that played about so prettily!" and tears poured like rain from the compassionate eyes as she carefully raised the now nearly insensible animal. But as the well-known and friendly fingers touched it, the flickering life seemed in a measure to return to the little sufferer. Its convulsive movements ceased, light came into the fast glazing eyes. With a last effort of grateful affection it licked the tender hands that supported it, then with one faint gasp of expiring life, it turned over upon its back and died.

"Away with you, vile curs!" continued the girl, turning towards the boys who yet lingered about the gate, and they, as if afraid of encountering her angry eyes, slunk back in eager haste, like beaten hounds, and disappeared, thereby releasing Marfa.

Marfa is a handsome young woman of a type not uncommon in Russia. Her dark eyes and brilliant complexion, her tall and well-developed figure, have unhappily attracted the notice of the precocious and dissolute young Prince; but Marfa is in love with the village lad whom she is about to marry, and has rebuffed the

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advances of her master. Hence his anger, and the revenge of which poor Luki is the victim. Marfa's cheeks are now swollen, and her eyes are dimmed from the cries she has uttered and the tears she has shed at having been forced to see her little pet so savagely tortured. Her pretty and coquettish costume is now tumbled and dirty. The snowy whiteness of her chemise and its flowing sleeves has disappeared in the grasp of the rough hands that have so tightly held her. Her blue petticoat is torn and covered with dust, even the trim neatness of her velvet bodice has departed, and any lingering thought of coquetry or feminine vanity disappears as she raises the still quivering body of her faithful little friend, and, while covering it with kisses, cries in passionate sorrow, and with the poetic utterance of a true Russian:

"When to-night arrives, my Luki, no more wilt thou creep near to rest beside me. When I carry the pails down to the stream, no more wilt thou dance around me, making my heart joyful with thy happy barks. Now for evermore shall I see thee struggling towards me from out that cruel fire, and hear thy cries for help. For help they would not let me give."

Here the poor girl's hysteric nature overcame her, and she sank in strong convulsions on the ground. The kind young Princess, who gave no thought to distinctions of rank, raised the peasant girl in her arms and strove by kisses and tender words to calm her.

"Do not cry so, my poor Marfa! The little creature suffers no more. I will get you another dog, though I know well none other can ever be the same to you."

Compassionate tears have been falling fast as she thus speaks, but again fury fills her soul as she notices the young savage, who has remained not far off, and lounging against the balustrade is gazing with a sarcastic smile of triumph upon the victims of his brutality. This smile, so cruel, so self-sufficient, lashes her anew into an anger that would probably have found vent in a storm of words, had she not at this moment been summoned into the house by Mademoiselle Blosse, the *dame de compagnie* of Princess Karàsoumoff, and the nominal governess of the young Princess Ariane,

Visitors had arrived, and the *samovar* had already been carried into the Garden Saloon. This interruption happily enables the girl to recollect and control herself; but her eyes flash fire as, turning away, she casts upon the young man one fierce and indignant glance ere she leaves the court. As for the young fellow himself he still smiles defiantly, though his eyes follow her with an expression of mingled admiration and fury singular in one so

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young. To the pain of the blow he has received he is apparently insensible. He bears it with the stoicism of a savage, although the mark is now showing deeply red across his cheek, but even more savage than this indifference to personal suffering is the cruel intensity of purpose his eyes express. However, he says no other word, but also leaves the court, and re-enters the villa.

This saloon is a large and handsome apartment, but, like many rarely-inhabited Russian country houses, has for years been neglected and uncared for. Immense sums of money have been spent upon the building, and equally lavish has been the expenditure upon the decorations; but he who built it is dead, he who decorated it is dead, and the present generation care too little for their country residence to keep it in even tolerable repair. Dreary in the extreme, therefore, is the vast, carpetless, curtainless room, the tarnished gilding of the massive furniture, and the distorted likenesses of the chairs and tables reflected and re-reflected from the many dim and damp-stained mirrors giving a weird ugliness to the desolate space. But through the open windows comes the rich scent of orange-blossoms, for many orange and citron trees still remain in the neglected gardens, and the breezes from the great river that intersects a considerable portion of the flat country around, not only cool the heated air of the hot summer's evening, but bring upon their wings the perfume of the ripening grasses that cover for unnumbered versts the vast extent of steppes that surround the villa. Beyond the garden, however, the view is as dreary as that within the saloon. As far as eye can reach is an unbroken expanse of colourless country, without trees, without houses, with nought to break the dim uniformity of dull and dingy brown, save where a ray of sunlight falls upon some of the many motionless pools, or rather holes of almost stagnant water with which the plain is studded. Clouds of gnats or mosquitoes quiver over their surface, their continuous humming making the only sound that disturbs the heavy silence, and nought of movement can be seen save the sluggish flight of some carrion crows or vultures as they slowly sail towards the horizon, probably attracted there by the meal they anticipate on some dead or dying animal.

The Karàsoumoffs are rich, exceptionally wealthy, and well able to keep this place in repair did they so choose, but the necessity, indeed the wisdom of so doing, never seems to enter their thoughts. During the summer they come to it, because every one spends part of the summer in the country, but to the Princess this short visit, these few weeks are an absolute penance.

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She pines for Moscow and its pleasures, and were these pleasures equally attainable in summer as in winter, never would she allow herself to be taken from them. She has paid occasional visits to Homburg, and to Baden-Baden, but of late years these once-loved resorts have failed to charm her. As for the Prince, he rather enjoys his stay in the country. It enables him to assert his position in the "Tchinn," or "assembly of nobles," and enjoy the happiness of taking precedence of his neighbours, and of being addressed as "Your high Origin," whereas none of the other provincial magnates can claim so magnificent an appellation. For the last two years the Princess has been less fretful during these trying weeks, for she has found that her son likes them. He has, it seems, made for himself especial amusements, and the one passion that beyond self-love can stir her indolent nature is love for this son, her only child.

The evening is hot to sultriness, and though the few scrubby pine trees that hide the village from the lordly villa give no shelter from the fierce heat of the setting sun, nevertheless this same heat brings forth an aromatic perfume that deodorizes in some degree the evil smells that men seem inevitably to create round their dwellings.

The Princess is reclining in a lounging chair, idly playing with her fan as she exchanges a few languid words with her guests, one of whom she views with some favour, as he comes from St. Petersburg, where he holds a minor position about the Court. The other guest she rarely condescends to notice, although he is already a somewhat distinguished soldier, but Colonel Vassiloffsky has been for several years in distant stations. He knows nothing therefore of Court life, he is, besides, rather shy, and direst offence of all, has neither in speech nor manner shown any great appreciation of the charms of the once famous beauty.

However, Mdlle. Blosse is by no means unwilling to devote herself to the entertainment of the tall and taciturn soldier, and she pours out his tumbler of tea, and assiduously offers him sugar and slices of lemon with so many honied speeches and tender glances, that she flatters herself she is gradually thawing him. At any rate she gains a few monosyllabic replies to the torrent of questions and exclamations with which she is plying him. In the meantime the pleasure of having her favourite gossip retailed to her in the accustomed accents, and with the delicate bitterness with which gossip is usually told, is gradually reviving the Princess. It is so cheering to hear of the annoyances, indeed even of

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the misfortunes of one's best friends! Such little incidents so relieve the dulness of banishment into the country!

The Princess, though no longer young, is still eminently handsome. In her youth she was a celebrated beauty. Unhappily the flatteries and attentions she received with indifference, even with disdain during these early and bewildering days of triumph in Paris and Rome, have now from long habit become a matter of necessity. A craving has been created that must absolutely be satisfied. She has now lowered herself sufficiently to accept from any man, however young and insignificant he may be, the homage of commonplace and even coarse adulation. Her irritable vanity must be soothed, and waning charms must not be too exacting.

Zougeroff is well aware of this weakness, so the measure of flattery he is offering for her acceptance is neither stinted in quantity nor refined in quality; but as it is graciously received, he is encouraged to persevere, for notwithstanding his position at Court, he is neither rich nor powerful, and his impoverished estates are rapidly dwindling from the incessant demands he makes upon them to support the expenses of life in the capital. The Princess, indolent and extravagant, is a useful friend, so Zougeroff is assiduous in his courtship, though at the same time his admiration for the fair though faded woman before him may well be excused. The exquisite delicacy of complexion once so remarkable has long ago departed, thanks to the glare of innumerable ball-rooms, and to the unremitting fatigue of daily and nighly amusement; but the lovely eyes are still the same in shape and colour, and nearly, if not quite as expressive as they were in bygone years; but constant discontent has worn ugly lines around them, and not all the resources of art can conceal the sarcastic contempt with which she regards the world around her, and everything and every one belonging to it. Golden hair still crowns the shapely little head, though doubtless here art has again been brought into requisition; but nature alone has produced those exquisite hands, now, as formerly, perfect in form and colour. The delicate fingers, scornfully disdainful of rings, move in graceful sympathy with the fan with which she is idly toying. Pleasant to her ears are the flatteries of her visitor, nevertheless no real emotion is visible on that fair face until her son enters the apartment, the ugly red line made by the avenging whip still sharply visible.

The Princess starts up in alarm as she sees the disfiguring mark.

"You are hurt, my darling! My precious one, what has happened?"

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"Alexis Alexandrovitch is so eager, so courageous in all he undertakes that he must keep you in constant anxiety, Princess," observes Zougeroff, with his most mellifluous and ingratiating lisp.

But the boy refuses to accept the implied compliment. "It is nothing," he says haughtily, as he moves towards tea-table. Then turning to the girl who has just entered, he adds abruptly,

"You may do it again, if you choose, but you know the penalty, and I'll be paid double."

He looks at her with a meaning smile, and then laughs with a laugh that has no sound of merriment in it.

"Yes; I did it, my aunt," replies Ariane timidly, and colouring deeply, though she speaks with decision; "but my cousin killed poor Marfa's pretty little dog. I—I am extremely sorry if I was rude, but he—he burnt it, my aunt, burnt it to death, the poor little creature," and here she turns away quickly that none may perceive the tears that are now coursing each other rapidly down her cheeks.

"Oh! you two children have been quarrelling again, I suppose," remarks the Princess quietly, as she languidly sinks back in the chair. "My dear Ariane, why cannot you let your cousin amuse himself in his own way? I suppose he paid for the dog?"

"It was not that, my aunt," returns the girl with a sob, "but it was so cruel that—that—oh! I cannot bear to think of it!"

"It is this sort of foolish sentimentality that is doing so much harm to the young people of the present day," says the Princess calmly. "Perhaps by-and-by I shall not be allowed to have my coachman flogged when he has been so drunk that he has upset me, or ruined my best horses. Or some day it may be objected to, that I give my own maid a few blows when she has half-killed me by running hair-pins into my head."

"Very true, very true, Vera Nicolaiovna," observes Zougeroff, in profoundly sympathizing accents.

"Things are certainly coming to a frightful pass. Before long we shall not be permitted to do the least thing we like with our own. It really seems monstrous. If Alexis Alexandrovitch buys a dog, why on earth should he not be allowed to do as he likes with it?"

"Because," interrupts Colonel Vassiloffsky sternly, "unnecessary cruelty is a disgrace to mankind, and is at all times indefensible."

The Princess raises her eyeglass, and looks at the speaker with cool, and somewhat impertinent curiosity; but something about him must please her, for she makes an effort.

"Nevertheless if fame says true, many of the enemies of Russia have had cause to rue the approach of Colonel Vassiloffsky."

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The soldier bows respectfully to the compliment, but makes no comment.

Zougeroff is piqued, his friend is trenching unpleasantly upon his own peculiar territory.

"No doubt reports err," he remarks with gentle, but emphasised sweetness; "but surely our troops of late have suffered reverses; nay, I had heard had even retreated before our enemies."

He smiles sweetly, as he speaks with a pitying kindness that is even more wounding than his words.

The hot blood flushes the soldier's brow, but he replies quietly:

"You have been misinformed, Basil Dmitrivitch, our troops have suffered no repulses. They have for some years made steady progress, though necessarily there have been casualties."

"I understood the English were formidable enemies."

"Formidable, no doubt, but just and even generous, and we are not at war with England."

"Ah! that England is a dreadful country," remarks the *dame de compagnie*, somewhat irrelevantly and intrusively. "I was there once for a whole month. Never will I again risk such a terrible time. No sun, always rain, and, *oh ciel*, what darkness and fogs! No wonder the English are such sad people, who know not what laughter means."

The Princess again raises her eyeglass, and gently closes her fan, as with weary insolence she looks contemptuously at the Frenchwoman.

"The tea is spoiling, my good Blosse, while you talk of that you do not understand. I like the English, many of the women are endurable, and the men, for the most part, are truly *grands seigneurs*. Your knowledge of them will be improved, my poor Blosse, when the young English lady arrives, whom I have engaged to assist in the education of my niece."

The blow is as unexpected as it is cruel, and it is so meant to be by the speaker. The unlucky governess reddens and pales alternately as she hears that her duties are to be divided, and her position consequently shaken.

The Russians are so generous and so hospitable, that rarely does an old servant or *employé* receive dismissal.

The Frenchwoman had also flattered herself that her assiduous devotion and systematic sycophancy had secured her a solid footing in this great family, but now who could tell what might not be the accursed influence of a treacherous and scheming

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Englishwoman. The governess knew well that, beyond her pure Parisian accent, she possessed no information of any real value.

However, remonstrance was impossible, so with flushed face and a heart full of malice and uncharitableness she retired behind the *samovar*. Ere long the visitors left, the Princess then retired to her boudoir, and Ariane also departed to seek poor Marfa.

The young Prince, after amusing himself by a few presuming and indeed impertinent speeches to the governess, which her miserable vanity induced her to accept as compliments, also went away, and Mademoiselle Blosse was left alone to solace herself by improving her wardrobe, and considering in what way she might best embitter the life of the intruder, whose arrival she felt assured from the Princess's manner might speedily be expected.

Though I am now the wife of a Russian officer, and in a position therefore of some official importance, I was once a poor, a very poor, governess, thankful to obtain a situation, with but a humble salary attached, in the princely family of the Karàsoumoffs. Humble as the salary was, it was a great chance for me to obtain such a place, and gratefully did I accept it. What had I, little Jenny Watson, to expect? I was not accomplished; I was not good-looking; I had not even what the farmers' wives about Clayton-in-Marsh described as a "presence," that is, I imagine, such a distinguished air that the world takes you at your own valuation, and gives you credit for powers and virtues that you only *look* to possess. However, I had not that air. I was commonplace and insignificant in appearance; moreover, when my father the curate of Clayton-in-Marsh died, I was miserably poor. The malady that ended in his death had required an expensive operation. I shall never regret that we tried this last chance of saving his dear life. The operation failed, and the chief surgeon, a man of renown in our country town, was aware that it had failed, and generously refused his fee; nevertheless the nourishment and medicines absolutely necessary before and after that sad day, speedily consumed the tiny sum that years of economy had enabled us to save. My father, happily, never knew this. He never knew that when he passed away not a shilling remained in the house.

Clayton-in-the-Marsh is a lonely and desolate place. The Rector, a selfish valetudinarian, lives abroad. There is no Squire. The few farmers in the parish till their own heavy land. True, they have no rent to pay, but the corn that was once the

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mainstay of their little farms no longer pays for its cultivation. A few sheep may be seen here and there, but as grass and roots do not prosper in the sticky clay soil, cattle-breeding is an impossibility. Even a cow is a luxury few dare indulge in. Poor souls! the misery in these dreary and decaying homesteads is sorrowful to see; nevertheless their owners are kind-hearted and even generous, and often have they and their wives splashed through the muddy lanes, not only to comfort me with their rough sympathy, but to bring me also a portion of their scanty dinner.

"Deed, Miss Jenny," said old Sam Stokes, as he uncovered a basin in which there was a slice of hard dumpling and a mass of boiled greens, "the missus says as ye maun eat summat tasty. She telled me ye maist looked like dyin' yersel. And doant ye tak' on for the old gent there," pointing to the room where my poor father lay, "he's a 'varsal deal better off nor us, I calkilate. I don't mind a bit clemming mysel, nor more does the wife, but it's hard to see the wee bit childer clemming, and hear them cryin' low for hunger when their mimmie has naught to gie them. I jist thank God He's took the maist o' mine, and He's welcome to more on them, an He will, for my old back's pretty nigh broke wi' the work. Work, work, and ne'er a bit o' good, for when the wakelin' crops come up what's the chance o' gettin' a decent price upon 'em? The furrineers hae it a' their ain way noo, and there's ne'er a man in the Parliament House to help the puir soul that has naught but his ain bit o' land to look to."

"Why don't you emigrate, Sam?" I suggested.

"I'm too old to gang to furrin' parts, miss, and more's the token cos the 'Mericans won't hae sich as me, so I maun e'en live and die here."

Poor Sam, his bent back and his horny hands said plainly enough how hard his life of labour had been! He had never spared himself, but all in vain. His heavy land would only grow wheat, and with the poor land so heavily taxed, English wheat had no chance against that grown abroad.

The humble funeral was over; but when I stood by the side of the damp hole in which my dear father had been laid, when I heard the earth fall with a dull thud upon the only being on earth whom I loved, why did not my heart break in that keen agony? Do many know what it is to be left on earth friendless, homeless, penniless? But the thread of life is strong in the destitute and the sorrowing, it more frequently snaps suddenly amongst the prosperous and the happy. The evening before I

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left the dismantled little house that had been my only home, I went again to kneel beside that dreary mound over which a few green sods had been placed. Close by I planted the only rose-tree our little garden possessed. Is it still growing, I wonder? its flowers were very sweet, and he loved them much. Sometimes now, when the wind is howling down from the North Pole, and the ice blast is sweeping over thousands of versts of ice and snow, the thought of those flowers comes vividly before me, and their fragrance seems mingled in the air around. Should I ever be in England again, my first visit will be to that humble grave; perhaps I may still find a rose upon that now aged tree.

After the sale of our furniture, and I had paid our few debts, exactly £6 10*s.* was left me upon which to begin life anew. Part of this must be spent in advertising for a place as nursery-governess or mother's help. I could teach a little French and Latin, and wrote a good hand. I would also gladly help in any household work, though now, unhappily, sorrow and nursing had left me pale and thin. I was trying to draw up a short advertisement, when the auctioneer, who had been settling with me, said—

"I see, miss, you are thinking of a place. How would you like to go to Russia? Mr. Green, who is Russian Consul at Hull, was asking my wife only yesterday if she knew any young lady who would like to go. It isn't much of a place, I fancy; the journey paid, and about £16 a year, 200 roubles, they call it; but the family is as grand as grand can be."

"Like it!" cried I, jumping up in a hurry and seizing his hand in gratitude. "Oh, Mr. Smith, how grateful I am to you and Mrs. Smith! But do you think I'm good enough?"

"Good enough! I should think so indeed! Why, Green and my wife were saying it would not be easy to find any one to accept such a beggarly offer, for I fancy the place is no sinecure. But you see, miss, places are not easy to find."

"No, indeed," cried I, "that's just it, and I am only too grateful for your kindness."

I needed no time for deliberation, nor indeed for preparation, for what had I to prepare? My simple outfit was soon completed, and within a fortnight I found myself an inmate of the Karàsoumoff Palace in Moscow.

All the bells in the world seemed jingling as I was being driven through the wide streets. The variety, the persistency of the sound that filled the air was absolutely maddening. It came rolling over one's head like the waves of a great sea, gathering

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up and absorbing in its deafening volume all other noises, whether produced by the rattling street traffic, by the voices of men, or the beat of the evening drums. After some months I learnt to distinguish the peculiar voices of these bells, and knew whence they came, from church, monastery, or convent; but to myself, as well as to many others on first arrival, their clamour produced a nervous irritation that was peculiarly trying.

I suppose I was not expected, but my nervousness on arriving was not decreased by finding the Dvornik or porter at the Palace seemed surprised to see me, and signed to me to wait. So I waited and waited at the foot of the immense staircase, not daring to ascend it, and yet becoming every moment more shy and miserable as time passed and no one appeared. At length I heard a door opened on the corridor above, and then came the sound of eager feet, accompanied by much talking and laughter from merry young voices. This was too dreadful to be borne calmly. Vainly, however, did I look around in the hope of finding some corner in which to hide, but no such corner was to be seen, and in another moment quite a crowd of young girls came trooping down the stairs, followed by a stout, dark lady, who, in a sharp, high-pitched voice, frequently remonstrated against their excess of merriment.

"Really, mesdemoiselles, I must entreat you to moderate your voices. Madame la Princesse will be seriously displeased at so much noise."

"Do not distress yourself, my dear Blosse," was said in a clear sweet, ringing voice. "My aunt cannot hear us, and if she did, I do not care."

"Hurrah for the courage of Ariane Vassilovna!" cried her companions, and they laughed again with all the careless, happy enjoyment of girls in their teens.

Pretty creatures they were, though of singularly varied types: blondes and brunes, dark eyes, blue eyes, brown hair and light hair, simply but perfectly dressed, and each possessing that peculiar air of distinction which appears to be the birthright of every girl and woman belonging to the higher classes of Russians. In no country is this distinctive evidence of noble birth more clearly marked. But as a queen among ordinary beauties, as a rose amongst other flowers, was the fair creature who had first spoken, and who I knew was to be my pupil from the name I had heard her called by. Never before, never since, have I seen anything to equal that perfect loveliness. The colour, the size, the appealing

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expression in the sweet and child-like blue eyes, came upon me then, as they have ever come upon me since, as a vision of one of Fra Angelico's pure angels. The cloud of golden hair, the exquisite delicacy of that fair face, with its rosy, smiling mouth, so kind in its playful mirth and innocent gaiety, can never fade from my memory. From the very first moment my eyes rested upon her I felt a passion of love that has not only never died, but has never diminished.

Directly she saw me she dashed through her group of friends, cleared at one bound the remaining stairs, and seizing my hands, shook them in hearty English fashion. In English, too, she said, but with a pretty foreign accent, and with an occasional hesitation as she sought for a word:

"And you must be our dear Miss Watson, that sweet, kind young lady we expected to-morrow. And no one there for you, and no one here to wait for you. How cruel you must think us! Farewell, Feodora Alexandrovna! Farewell, Vera Basilovna! farewell all, all. I go not with you to-day. I go with my Miss Watson, to give her tea, to watch over her. Will you not that I watch over you?" she said, turning to me. "Nay, that is not good English, but you will teach me better."

She gave some rapid orders in Russian to the many servants who were now waiting in the hall, and then hurried me upstairs to a small room, where soon appeared the steaming *samovar*, and the many little side-dishes of dried tongue, anchovies, caviar, &c., that are the introductions to a Russian meal. She moved about and chattered merrily with the vivacity of a young bird, kindness and grace being the accompaniment of every action. Then she took me to the bedroom, or rather corner of the bedroom I was to occupy. Princess Ariane herself occupied half of the large, bare, uncarpeted room. To Mademoiselle Blosse, the French lady I had seen, and myself were allotted the other two corners, each bed and dressing-table being sheltered by a large screen.

Magnificent as is a great Russian palace, homely comfort, such as we understand it in England, is unknown. Home life, in fact, according to our ideas, does not exist, and this want, and especially the absence of privacy, was to me for a long time a great trial. I longed for an hour or two of solitude, and above all for some spot where I could remain undisturbed, my screen being no protection against Mademoiselle Blosse's observations, her snores, or even her sighs. Though neither young nor slender, my companion was unhappily exceedingly sentimental, and chronically

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suffered from the pangs of unrequited affections. She also resented my coming; for though I was not good-looking, I was younger and thinner than herself; so she revenged herself upon me by holding up my faulty French expressions to ridicule, and by especial abuse of the Duke of Wellington. I bore with great equanimity her injurious observations respecting our Iron Duke, and indeed those she uttered against most of our eminent statesmen; but her laughter at my French was painful to bear. It had, however, one good result. I studied eagerly and assiduously both that language and Russian, not one sentence of which difficult tongue could Mademoiselle Blosse ever master.

My pupil was always fascinating, but she was uncertain, and consequently unsatisfactory. She was hot-tempered also and impulsive, and with the confidence of a spoilt child, and the consciousness of a position that placed her above ordinary criticism, she loved to enunciate startling propositions, and express opinions diametrically in opposition to those amongst whom she lived. Her democratic theories amused her uncle, who loved to joke with her, and who, after irritating all the latent passions of her warm heart but ill-regulated mind, would pat her on the head, assuring her that he thought she was quite right, but that she would assuredly end her days on the scaffold, unless Alexis could succeed in sufficiently crushing her.

After so speaking, he would depart, laughing heartily, leaving his fiery and excited niece to storm up and down the room, vowing she would not be crushed by Alexis or by any one. When these outbreaks took place before the Princess—a rare occurrence, however—that lady would clasp both her fair hands before her eyes, and call for her salts. Then, while looking Mlle. Blosse and myself straight in the face, she would declare that in these days young girls were so badly brought up there was no enduring them, especially as it was impossible to find a governess or a *dame de compagnie* who was of the least use.

Then Mademoiselle Blosse would retire in tears, but I, with true English bull-dog tenacity, would hold my ground, and proceed to pour out the tea with phlegmatic calm. Irrespective of the teaching we endeavoured to give, the duties we two governesses had to perform were not heavy; but they were incessant, and never could we reckon upon a moment's relaxation, a moment's freedom. Excepting when occupied with our pupil on those rare occasions when her attention could be secured, we were incessantly assisting in either receiving or preparing for company.

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The Princess could not endure a moment's solitude. Always one, often both of us, were required to be in attendance all day, and not unfrequently for a great portion of the night.

By birth a member of one of the noblest and most important of the old Muscovite families, the possessor of a considerable fortune, a beauty of European renown, Princess Vera Nicholaovna Bametieffska had not consented to espouse Prince Karàsoumoff until her charms were considerably on the wane, and until she found herself foiled in the many efforts she had made to secure a husband amongst the members of some reigning royal family. Still beautiful, though her beauty was now so faded that she shunned the too vivid light of day, she preferred reigning in Moscow rather than occupying a secondary position in St. Petersburg. Every Royalty, every notability who came to Moscow, sought reception in her *salon;* otherwise the Princess professed to have withdrawn from general society, and only received her intimates, that is to say, a coterie consisting of her greatest admirers, and those ladies who accepted every dictum of their hostess respecting politics or fashions with unquestioning humility.

We governesses were not expected to speak during the afternoon or evening receptions, at any rate our voices were not to be raised above a whisper; but at dinner we had to serve as a species of Greek chorus, and to the best of our ability fill up any pauses that might occur.

As for the Prince, we all knew he heartily disliked his wife's friends; nevertheless, as he was perfectly well-mannered and also piqued himself upon his thorough acquaintance with what he called "*les convenances*," he never failed to present himself at his wife's tea-table once a week, generally every Wednesday.

On these days the Princess always wore gloves, and as the hour approached for the expected and previously announced visit, abandoned her usual lounging attitude, and sat stiffly upright in her chair. No sooner was the jingle of the heavy military spurs heard resounding on the parquet of the ante-room, and before the groom of the chambers could throw open the folding doors for the entrance of the master of the house, than the guests then present would either rise from their seats, or push their chairs back so as to open a passage for the husband to approach his wife. The handsome, portly man would enter, his uniform a mass of gold embroidery, innumerable orders glittering on his breast. Few could look on him without admiration, so handsome, so dignified, so well preserved was he but the Princess moves

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neither hand nor foot, nor does the shadow of a smile relieve the waxen rigidity of her features. Little does the husband heed her coldness. With smiling courtesy he bows to the assembled guests, as he makes his way towards her, and we can hear the sharp click of his spurs as his heels meet in military precision, while bowing over and kissing the hand, taken but not extended.

"Princess, I rejoice to see your health is good. To-day you are more beautiful than ever. You will, I trust, let me know when our country life will be agreeable to you."

This is the invariable tenor of his words, to which the Princess rarely deigns any reply. Nothing more is said by the married couple, but the Prince then probably addresses a few compliments to the prettiest of the ladies present, and bows slightly to Mademoiselle Blosse and myself as we courtesy respectfully to him as he passes. He thus edges himself towards the door, where he invariably pauses a few moments to whisper some joke or other in the ears of the men who are standing round it. These jokes are probably of a questionable character, judging from the laughter they excite, but no allusion is ever afterwards made to them, and in another instant the master of the house has disappeared, not to be seen again by us for another week.

Hardly has the door closed than the Princess drags off her gloves and throws them on the ground with a gesture of disgust. It is one of the duties of Mlle. Blosse and myself to pick them up, and they are our perquisites if we care to keep them. To me there is something so humiliating both in the action and in the gift, that I gladly make over my share to my companion.

Never, I believe, does the Princess condescend to speak of her griefs to any one; but it is well known that the Prince's chosen associates are to be found amongst the actresses of the minor theatres, and especially does he affect the society of the Gipsy singers, of whom he is a peculiar and munificent patron. The sole object of her affection and the delight of the Princess is her son and only child, Prince Alexis Alexandrovitch, and certainly if personal beauty suffices to fill a mother's heart with pride, none can have more reason for exultation than Princess Karàsoumoff. The noble stature, the perfect features, the graceful manners of this young man make him shine with almost god-like superiority over the many other handsome young Russians to be found in Moscow; but much as I feel compelled to admire him personally, there is something in the hard fixedness of his steely blue eyes that inspires me with a decided though nameless terror. Such

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must have been the eyes of the serpent when he lured Eve to her undoing. Such eyes have a perilous fascination from which the victim who is tempted by them rarely, if ever, escapes, though with the temptation comes the knowledge that death or destruction lurks in their dangerous beauty.

I honestly pitied my poor companion, for she felt the fascination without having, as I so happily had, the safeguard of exceeding terror. Her too susceptible, sentimental heart had given itself away in hopeless, abject love; but though her sighs and sufferings much disturbed my sleep at night, for her sighs distinctly penetrated the screen, yet they neither diminished her bulky figure, nor did they elicit the slightest notice from the object so slavishly adored. Had she been a footstool or an intrusive animal, he could not have passed her, or even pushed her aside, with more contemptuous scorn.

One day I found her hanging out of the window in a paroxysm of admiration and despair. A victoria, drawn by a pair of horses of priceless value, whose shape and action were perfect even in the estimation of Russian connoisseurs, had just driven to the door of the Palace. The young Prince, accompanied by his favourite boarhound, was lounging on the satin cushions. As he raised his hat to some ladies in a passing carriage, and a rare smile brightened his usually stern face, I thought I had never beheld a more superb type of humanity; but as I was looking and really admiring him, the hound by his side chanced to get in his way and he gave the animal so savage a kick on the mouth, that the poor creature jumped howling from the carriage, his jaws dripping with blood, and fled beneath the horses' legs as a refuge from his unfeeling master. Probably neither his master nor the coachman saw where the dog was, but the signal to drive on was given, and the horses bounded forward. The generous animals would not hurt their stable friend, but the wheels passed over the hapless animal's body. It gave a sharp yelp and lay still; but the carriage drove on, its owner either not caring or not knowing what had happened.

Horrified and shocked, I flew downstairs, and arrived at the portal just as the Dvornik had raised the poor beast. It was not dead, but its leg was broken. Carefully we took it to the stables, where one of the grooms set and bandaged the broken bone. We left it fairly comfortable on its bed of straw, but of little avail was our care. When Prince Alexis returned, and was informed of what had happened, he coolly ordered the dog to be destroyed

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and a similar one to be bought. This might perhaps have been the best, probably the most merciful proceeding as regards the injured animal; but there was such an absence of feeling, such an amount of cold-bloodedness about the whole affair, that I ever afterwards felt a considerable increase of aversion for the young man. What he might have been had he been trained in a school of reasonable self-denial, it is impossible to say; but the unbounded indulgence of his mother, the debasing adoration of the sycophants who surrounded her, the derisive indifference of his father had produced a casing of ingrained selfishness through which no thought of others could ever penetrate. That his will, or even his wishes, should ever be opposed for any length of time, appeared to him impossible. So completely did all other inmates of the Palace bow down to him, that at one time, I have no doubt, the temporary wilfulness of his cousin, and the irritation she exhibited during their frequent quarrels did but amuse him and heighten his interest in her, the more so, possibly, as these quarrels always resulted in his being the ultimate, if not the immediate victor. Alas! these encounters did but whet his passion, and act as a kind of spice to the monotony of their engagement.

Much to my grief, I felt little doubt that Prince Alexis' feelings were but passions. There was nothing generous in them, nor did he understand the tenderness of affection. The blessedness, the sweetness of such relations with others were unknown to him. In his likings, his friendships, or his love, the fervour of his passion or his enthusiasm was violent but never lasting. What would it be for his cousin when she became his wife?

That Princess Ariane loved him, and loved him with devotion was indisputable. Even their frequent quarrels were but evidences of the influence he had over her. After every sharp dispute the girl became more tender in manner, more eager to make amends for any hard words she may have used. Her passionate but generous nature repented at once, and longed to make reparation. Would there had been the same warm-hearted repentance and regret on the part of the Prince! Rarely did he yield, however trivial had been the subject in dispute, but usually after any fiery discussion he would show a lavish generosity by bringing his betrothed magnificent presents. With tears of delight would the poor child accept them, and proudly exhibit them to me as evidences of his great love. But this very munificence appeared to me to savour much more of the

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gifts of a sultan to his slave, rather than to be the offerings of a lover to the girl whom he adores.

Day by day did her many endearing qualities attach me more firmly to her, and therefore day by day did I tremble more and more as to what her future might be. She had, in a peculiar degree, that sweetness of manner, that lovableness of character that render Russian women, when charming, so irresistibly fascinating. She had also that simple trustfulness and confidence in those she loved, rarely found where there is excess of civilization; but unhappily she had not that reticence, that power of concealing her emotions, absolutely necessary in a country civilized but on the surface. Not only necessary but of vital importance, for those in high places, constantly beneath the ken of an arbitrary government that sanctions not only condemnation but punishment, solely upon suspicion and not upon proofs. Her affectionate heart, her sensitive nature, never ceased to rebel against the many injustices, the many inconsiderate acts of cruelty that are of too frequent occurrence in Russia. Notwithstanding their many good, even engaging qualities, the absolute disregard of truth, the cringing deceitfulness of the lower classes make intercourse with them very trying, and tend to provoke harshness from their superiors. Even kind people become irritated, and are sometimes stirred to fury by the constant lies, the persistent roguery of their servants. And this roguery, these lies multiply tenfold when the masters are feared rather than loved, although the culprits are well aware that their faults, when discovered, will be punished with unsparing severity.

Prince Alexis was one of the most exacting, it may be said one of the most revengeful of masters. Neither errors nor faults were ever forgotten nor forgiven. Even now I shudder when I recall the terrible results of some of his punishments, as ingenious as they were cruel. He was sufficiently prudent to keep the knowledge of many of his proceedings from his cousin, for should the young Princess become aware of what was about to be done or had taken place, she gave way to a perfect storm of excitement and of passionate misery. Of little avail, however, were these storms, these cries, or prayers. Occasionally I expostulated with her, endeavouring to show that her injudicious intervention not unfrequently bore evil fruits, doing more harm than good. Then would she turn upon me, and upbraid me roundly for my hard heart and cold-blooded wisdom.

When I look back upon those old days, with what keen anguish

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does not the memory of that lovely tear-stained face come before me! I hear again the sobs, I see again the tears wrung from that tender young heart by the sufferings and woes of others. What cruel self-reproach comes now to me, for, had I spoken out then, perhaps I might have saved her! Heaven knows I loved her, and shrank from grieving her, so I remained silent while fate was weaving about her the web that was to enclose and doom her.

I had been nearly two years with this great family, and now the wedding-day of the two young people was very near, and every one in any way connected with them was speedily engulfed in the vortex caused by the immensity of the preparations.

I had by this time become sufficiently acquainted with the customs of the wealthy Muscovite nobles to be awere how lavish is their expenditure on occasions of great family or national *fêtes*, but even this amount of knowledge had not prepared me for the extraordinary splendour with which this marriage was to be celebrated, Oriental magnificence being united to Western refinement. The gorgeous vessels of gold and silver, many of them adorned with precious stones, displayed on every table and buffet, were marvellous specimens of art and costliness, and the rare flowers and fruit brought from every part of the world were exquisite features in themselves.

Princess Karàsoumoff loved flowers, and at every season of the year her especial rooms were crowded with beautiful and delicate plants, whose sweet perfume produced a delicious languor that seemed to annihilate all the commoner and coarser cares of life; but now many of the great halls were turned into semi-tropical gardens, where fountains fell with soothing music amidst beds of brilliantly coloured exotics, and the vast staircase was bordered by banks of fern, interspersed by great orange trees in their full perfection of fruit and flowers.

As the preparations went on, as the rush of excitement increased, we all became more interested, and more absorbingly occupied, all but the fair creature in whose honour so much time, money, and attention were being expended. She alone was listless; she alone shrank from observation, and I am convinced all this lavish display was antagonistic to her feelings. She indeed occasionally said so, but her remarks fell on unheeding ears. At length she lost her sweet gaiety, and became nervous and agitated. I watched her with an ever-increasing pain and uneasiness, but her aunt took no notice of these moods. The Princess was far too deeply interested in unceasing consultations

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with the various French dressmakers and milliners who now thronged the Palace, and with the many wondrous combinations of colours and stuffs that were hourly brought for our notice and admiration. Poor Mademoiselle Blosse was to a certain extent in her element amongst all these fine garments, nevertheless her unhappily jealous and curious nature was distracted by the sight of splendours in which she could never hope to share.

As for the Prince, he joked with his niece as usual, and appeared quite unable to understand that the approaching ceremony was in any degree more important than the usual weekly receptions. A new troop of Hungarians had arrived, and no home interests could rival the delight he felt in such an acquisition, especially as the chief singer was young, beautiful, and wildly eccentric. Her mad exploits had already made her prominent in the great world of Moscow.

Never, however, had Prince Alexis been so tender and kind. For the first time he seemed honestly anxious to make his cousin happy, for the first time he was really attentive and gentle to the poor child, whose future happiness would be so entirely in his hands.

In most southern countries Church ceremonies are gorgeous exhibitions, but nothing can exceed the overwhelming brilliancy of a great Russian Festival. The myriad lights that blaze from walls and roof flash with dazzling effulgence on untold wealth in the shape of precious stones. Not only also are the costumes of the ladies quite dazzling from magnificent jewels, but the images of the Virgin and of many Saints are like marvellous constellations, from the diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and pearls with which they are encrusted. The nimbus around those sacred heads flash forth coruscations of varied lights that are reflected again and again from the golden embroidery on the vestments of the officiating clergy, and from the glittering orders and brilliant uniforms of the guests in the wedding train.

And then the music! Can anything more divine be heard than the exquisite tones of a Russian choir? As the rich harmonious flood of melody rises and falls, rolling down from the golden dome and pealing onwards until it fills the mighty space of the great church, the heart goes out towards those voices of the Heavenly Host in unutterable sympathy. With them we soar towards Heaven, borne upwards on the wings of the divine and sacred strain.

Magnificent was the group of nobles gathered together that

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day, beautiful exceedingly were the many fair women there assembled, but all attention was riveted by, all eyes were fixed upon, the girlish, simple figure who stood in their midst. She had resisted all endeavours to make her select a magnificent wedding toilet, but as we looked upon the slender shape, veiled but not hidden beneath its vaporous cloud of tulle, each one felt that neither diamonds nor cloth of silver could have decked her so perfectly as did her own marvellous beauty. What circlet of jewels could have crowned her so well as did that golden wealth of sunny hair? What satin could have matched the exquisite purity of that perfect skin? A necklace would but have marred the fair lines of that snow-white throat.

Even the hard, steely eyes of Prince Alexis beamed with the light of love as he looked upon the fair being by his side. How brilliant and how blessed appeared the future of the newly-married pair as they passed between the rows of admiring friends, moving over the shower of roses that had been cast upon the carpet on which they walked, and whose sweet perfume mingled with the scent of the clouds of incense that was rolling around the roof of the magnificent building!

Tender and exquisite was the music that seemed floating down to them from Heaven, promising them a happiness such as this world has rarely known.

Yet tears, bitter tears, filled my eyes as I watched that fair young creature, pure and beauteous as a lily, thus pass away from beyond my sight and from out of my life. Ah! I knew well that I had lost her, that never again could she be aught to me, but none that day prayed more fervently than I, that she had only gone from me, who so truly loved her, to find a new, and still more holy love in the new life she was about to lead.

(*To be continued.*)

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FEES, WORK, AND WAGES IN GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOLS.

THE fees in most High Schools for Girls vary from three guineas to five guineas per term. However long a pupil may remain in one of these schools, and however advanced the work may be which she is doing, if she has entered the school under fourteen years of age, the four guineas which were paid for her in her first term when she was working in a class of twenty, or twenty-five or even thirty pupils, presided over by a teacher in receipt of a salary of from £80 to £100 a year, these same four guineas will continue to be her terminal fee to the last day that she remains in the school, though she may then be sharing with perhaps one or two other pupils nearly the whole time of the most highly paid teacher in the school. The tuition which she is receiving from one or more of these highly qualified teachers will enable a clever girl to win a scholarship at Girton or Newnham, if she wishes to go to Cambridge, or at Bedford College or the Royal Holloway College, if she is ambitious of obtaining a London degree. Moreover, she need not leave the school until she has already advanced far on the way to the coveted distinction of a B.A.'s gown. In almost all High Schools preparation is given for the London Matriculation; in some of the largest the intermediate Examination in Arts is also included in the curriculum; and after this has been passed, only the Final Examination separates the candidate from her degree. That all this can be done by a clever girl (school scholarships being left out of the question) for an annual fee of twelve guineas, may seem to many good people a near approach to an Educational Elysium. I hope in this article to be able to adduce some strong reasons for thinking that the Elysium is somewhat less perfect than it may at first sight appear.

In the first place the Educational Elysium is to a large extent

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purchased at the expense of the teachers. According to the Chairman of the Girls' Public Day Schools Company, the average salary paid in the Company's schools is £113. Some teachers save, and cramp themselves in their physical and intellectual enjoyments in order to do so. Others, with a noble improvidence which I, for one, cannot reprehend, bid the future take its chance. They remember that good teaching cannot be given by machines; that if they are to give out knowledge and ideas, they must also take them in, and they maintain their freshness by visiting foreign countries, by purchasing books, and by indulging in many intellectual and artistic pleasures, which women on £113 a year would perhaps more prudently forego, but by which their teaching power and their power of influencing the young is continually recuperated. But the choice between Efficiency and Prudence is a very real, and at times a very bitter one. It is one of the sacrifices which have to be made in order that an education up to the scholarship standard of the Universities may be supplied at an average fee of twelve guineas a year.

The absurd insufficiency of the fees in the upper forms is also to a great extent paid for by economies lower down in the school. In a large school there may be three pupils at the top paying at the most forty-five guineas for the services of one University graduate at a salary of £150, while in the lowest forms a teacher at £80 will have in her class as many as thirty small fry, paying between them no less than 270 guineas.* In all schools the lower classes are much more remunerated than the upper, but in Girls' High Schools the disproportion is unusually great, and is part of a general system by which the interests of the great majority of the pupils are sacrificed to those of the few.

The Higher Education of Women has many opponents, but I hope I may never be numbered among them. That the highest knowledge should be attainable alike by men and women without distinction of sex is day by day becoming a more obvious truism, of which the academic successes of a lady Senior Wrangler and a lady Senior Classic are only illustrations. Moreover, the "Health Statistics," so laboriously collected and lucidly set forth by Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, must surely have dissipated in the minds of all who have read them the old belief that a University education is to be purchased by women only at the expense of health. When

* Of course in neither case does one teacher give her whole time to the class; but if three teachers each give a third of their time, the arithmetical result is the same.

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compared with their sisters and cousins who have never known the sweets of University life, Newnham and Girton students are found to possess, not a lower, but a slightly higher record of health; and taking into consideration that the three years spent at Cambridge postpones their average age of marriage by nearly the same period, they find about as many husbands and produce rather more numerous and rather healthier children than their sisters. But if Cambridge Triposes and London B.A.'s are good for many, they are not therefore for all, and that the whole education of hundreds of girls who have no inclination for a life of learning should be forced out of its natural course by this confusion of the ideals of the few and of the many, is nothing less than an absurdity.

Pupils in Girls' High Schools may be divided into three classes:—(1) Clever girls aiming at a University career; (2) girls of well-to-do parents who will stay at school until eighteen or nineteen, but whose education will then be considered finished; (3) daughters of poorer parents (or of parents whose ideas of education are imperfectly developed) who will be removed from school at sixteen, and go into shops or places of business. It is the charm of the present High School system that what is good for one of these classes is considered good for all.

The great fault which I here desire to attack is the multiplicity of subjects which a clever girl of fourteen or fifteen is encouraged to learn, without any adequate enquiry as to her probable future career. Speaking generally, these subjects may be reckoned as French, German and Latin, Euclid, Algebra and Botany, and whatever amount of English Literature and History the school curriculum can find time for. If the girl leave school before she is seventeen, her ignorance is deplorable; if she stay till she is eighteen or even nineteen, she will have laid a good foundation, but will have seen so little of the fairer side of learning, that the chances of her ever caring to build upon it are sadly small. Her knowledge of English literature will be represented by the results of a study of a "period," probably in Morley's 'First Sketch,' and an acquaintance with school editions of two or three "special books." She may or she may not have imitated the historic school-girl who tied down the texts of her editions, lest they should diminish her attention to the notes; but it is certain that her studies will have been almost entirely philological and not at all literary. Of French or German literature her knowledge will be of the same kind, only much less, and in

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capacity to speak these languages she will, as soon as she leaves England, find herself distinctly inferior to a clever waiting-maid who has lived abroad for a few months. As for her mathematics and science, they will be "in the air," and will thus very soon evaporate, nor while they last are they likely to give her much help if she is lucky enough to have a little money to invest, or enable her to bring much hygienic knowledge to bear upon any domestic duties which she may be called on to perform. She has received a fairly good preparation for a life of study, but unless she has to earn her living by teaching, it is extremely unlikely that this is the life which she will lead; nor, if she is to be a teacher, is this early training sufficiently liberalizing in its influence.

The broad lines of a reform are not difficult to trace. The chief object of education is to convey, not knowledge but the love of it, and the method of learning. There are few European languages of which an educated person may not gain a fair acquaintance by six weeks' hard work, and many undergraduates, women as well as men, who have gone up to the University Greekless, have obtained good Classical Honours. If a colloquial mastery of a language can be *picked up* in youth, this is all clear gain, but to multiply purely grammatical knowledge is surely idle. Yet to this purely grammatical knowledge, eight or more school-hours out of the total twenty-five which compose the average school-week are at present devoted. It is here that our first reduction must be made. Mathematics, which at present receive as a rule about five hours, may be left as they are, for a reason hereafter to be mentioned. English subjects, which are allowed eight or ten hours, require an increase, but rather in the quality of the teaching than in the time devoted to them. The odd two hours, *i.e.* three quarters of an hour twice a week, in order that Science may figure in the school curriculum, are now devoted to teaching text-book Botany with such wretched specimens as a luckless teacher can procure in towns. These might be expanded into one school-hour devoted every day to lectures on "general knowledge," which should include all the ordinary applications of science to every-day life. With this curriculum an average girl who left school at seventeen should have a competent knowledge of the essentials of English History, a real interest in Literature, and a fair knowledge of French. If she stayed a year or a year and a half longer, her knowledge of all these subjects would have increased, and she may have acquired

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enough German to render her future studies easy if she cares to carry them any further. At whichever age she leaves she will have learnt something of the chemistry of common life, and, unless she have a native incapacity for the subject, will be at least a good practical arithmetician. Above all, she will not have been overworked.

As to this last point of overwork a word must be said. If I have any lingering doubt whatever as to the value of Mrs. Henry Sidgwick's statistics already mentioned, it is because the younger generation of University women have as a rule been trained in High Schools, and of their sisters, with whom the comparisons are made, probably many have been at High Schools also. Now it is my firm belief that only idlers and fools overwork themselves at the University: the idlers spasmodically, to make up for wasted time; the fools continuously, or by fits and starts, according to the kind and the degree of their folly. The Final Examinations, both at Oxford and Cambridge, offer the least possible inducement to mere cram. They are a test of ability rather than of a knowledge of facts, and the man or woman who reads a steady six hours a day, will in nine cases out of ten attain the highest position in the class list of which he or she is capable. Thus overwork at the Universities is only possible as the result of sheer mismanagement; but in schools, and especially in day schools, it is a constant and a pressing danger. Lessons have to be prepared and exercises to be written between the afternoon of one day and the morning of the next. If they are not got through by the appointed time, there is certain shame and possible punishment. All this is inevitable, and it points to the need of the very utmost care that the work which has to be performed under these conditions should be as light and easy as possible. But with the present multiplication of subjects—especially of languages, which as now taught require a peculiar amount of home preparation—the work for the average pupil is not easy, and for the slow or the specially conscientious it is often cruelly hard. In many cases home work occupies four and five hours five nights every week during term time, and of the immense evil of this over-pressure, which comes precisely at the period when girlhood is passing into womanhood, there cannot be two opinions. Here, and not at the Universities, is the price exacted, at which some women, if only a few out of many, purchase their education. By diminishing the multiplicity of subjects, by substituting school work for home work in mathe-

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matics, and by extending the number of classes in which, according to the happy phrase, "the teachers learn the lessons and say them to the girls," the risk of overwork would be enormously lessened, and at the same time an education would be provided, which for the great majority of girls would be far more real and far more liberalizing than that at the present offered.

"But," it may be said, "this education you propose would not be an High School education: the fault does not lie with us, but with the parents who send us children who are not fitted to receive the education which we offer, or who take them away from school at too early an age." The objection would be absolutely just, if it were not absolutely unpractical. For twenty per cent. of the girls the curriculum of an average High School, save for the risk of overwork, is good enough; but the odd seventy or eighty per cent., whose fees to a large extent subsidize the education of the clever minority, have these no right to be considered? The school receives them; without them it could not pay its way, yet no pains is taken to give them an education satisfactory and complete as far as it goes. They are forced, or at any rate encouraged, to waste the last years of their school-life in taking up fresh subjects which they will never carry any further than the merest rudiments, and at last they leave school, profoundly satisfied with the variety of their accomplishments, but without any intellectual tastes or any abiding love of learning.

If this be true, and I do not think that it will be seriously disputed by any but official advocates, surely the educational centre of gravity needs to be shifted. Let the twenty per cent. of clever girls remain in the school up to any reasonable age, but let them form a "University Class," like the "Army Class" in some boys' schools, and let the ideals and the aspirations of the school have their chief regard to the eighty per cent., the girls whose formal education will cease at seventeen. The Higher Education will receive no harm, but a great benefit. It is hardly too much to say that at present the High Schools must be reckoned among its enemies. Despite large offers of scholarships and exhibitions, the Royal Holloway College has only some sixty or seventy students. Bedford College, London, though better off than this, is yet but thinly attended if we consider its central position, the known excellence of its staff, and the magnificent new laboratories which are now open to its students.

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If the High Schools performed their work efficiently, if they offered an education which encouraged the love of learning and intellectual tastes, every group of four or five of them would require a Bedford College or a Holloway College as its head; nor would the parents of clever girls any longer be tempted to regard the education of their children up to a University standard as something obviously to be paid for by the inadequate remuneration of their teachers, or the utter neglect of the interests of the majority of their schoolfellows.

ALFRED W. POLLARD.

FIRSTLINGS.

THE joy of babes who see the primrose dart
  Its first sweet rays o'er banks where Winter lies;
  The joy of those who under alien skies
Behold strange lands from distant waters start,
And shores unknown drive sky and sea apart;
  All joys were mine of all discoveries
  When through my fitful April shone thine eyes:
First Friendship is the primrose of the heart.

O Lady mine! the birds have ceased to sing,
  The crops are garnered now; along the path
Decay waves sallow arms o'er Autumn lands.
But in those fields where first we claspèd hands
  Thy face still smiles amid the aftermath,
And cheats my fancy with a dream of Spring.

E. S.

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BEGUN IN JEST.

BY MRS. NEWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "HER WILL AND HER WAY," "WITH COSTS," "THE LAST OF THE HADDONS," &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

"GOOD-BYE."

THE first person Mabel's eyes lighted upon as she stepped on to the platform of the little Braydon Station was Gerard. He had heard from Mrs. Brandreth that Miss Leith had "gone careering off somewhere in her irresponsible fashion," and had been waiting about on the chance of her arriving by the express. He was looking worn and ill, and, to his annoyance, this was becoming more and more apparent, bringing upon him the kind of notice which he so much desired to avoid. To none had the change seemed more marked than it now did to Mabel, as he advanced towards her, and her heart went out to him as it had never done before.

"Why do you go travelling about in this way?" he asked abruptly—in contrast with his usual manner it might have seemed almost unkindly, had she not been able by the light of the new knowledge that had come to her to read him aright. His anxiety, although so roughly expressed, augured favourably for her, she thought. He must still care for her—a little!

"I have only been to see Dorrie," she replied, so meekly and penitently as to appear quite unlike herself; even had not the new, shy expression in her eyes, the tender curve of her lips, and the colour coming and going in her cheeks showed him that she was more than usually moved, though he did not interpret it to be in his own favour.

"There was no need for you to go alone," he said, after she had declined to avail herself of the fly waiting in the station-yard and they had turned into the road leading to Beechwoods.

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"So many women travel alone now, Gerard."

"They are accustomed to it, and know how to take care of themselves."

"So do I, please;" with a little upward deprecatory look, half shy, half something else, which he did not understand, in the blue-grey eyes.

It was not unnoticed by him—no look nor movement of hers ever was—and the new expression in her face had struck him at once. But he knew all too well of the danger to his peace of letting his eyes dwell upon her face, and resolutely turned them away again, walking silently on by her side.

"You know that Dorrie is engaged to Mr. Aubyn, Gerard?" she presently recommenced. "She has been telling me."

"You were not much surprised, I suppose?"

"I did not expect to hear it, but it has made me very happy."

"Ah, you have not seen them together. But, even without that, the mere knowing them both, and knowing that they see a great deal of each other, might, I think, have been enough to enable one to surmise what was likely to follow."

"I am so stupid and slow to see some things"—still more meekly.

He cast another side-glance at her glowing face, and replied, with a grim smile,

"Are you?"

She failed to recognize that her sudden change of tone—the difference that was evident in her look and manner—was more likely to puzzle than enlighten him, and was beginning to chafe a little impatiently at the difficulty she encountered in approaching what she wanted to say. How could she say it if he kept as stiff and cold and distant with her as this? Moreover, it seemed almost as though he were desirous of hastening his steps so as to render their *tête-à-tête* as short as possible, and they were already near the gate in the park wall, whence there was a short cut through the plantation to the house. She was still endeavouring to find words to express what she wanted to say, when he opened the door with the pass key Aubyn had given him for her, standing aside, and lifting his hat, as he said:

"You will be all right now."

He was going to leave her! Seeing that if he did, her chance would be gone, it might be for some time to come, she hurriedly began, in her agitation laying her hand upon his arm to detain

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him, a proceeding sufficient in itself to a little surprise Gerard, with whom she was not accustomed to use such little familiarities of manner:

"I want to say something to you, please, Gerard."

He looked down at her hand, setting his teeth with the determination that, if she could feel the quick throbbing of his heart, she should have no other sign of his weakness, and then passed through with her, and closed the door, quietly saying,

"What is it, Mabel? Something very solemn?"

"I want to ask your pardon. Oh, do help me a little, Gerard!" —beginning to show symptoms of impatience. How could she go on if he stood looking at her in that way, as though he were carved in stone!

"Help you to ask my pardon?"—endeavouring to speak lightly, but afraid of trusting himself to say much.

"Please do not make a jest of it! I am so sorry because I must have seemed so very wrong—and—unkind"—nervously.

"If you could contrive to be a little more explicit now as to what was wrong and unkind."

She laughed a little confusedly.

"Well, I meant—my rudeness and unkindness on the terrace the other night, Gerard. I am so very sorry."

"That!" It was on her conscience that she had spoken too plainly, he thought. Her heart was troubled for him in his misery, that was what she wanted to ask pardon for, adding, with a bitter smile:

"I do not think you need have any qualms of conscience as to the way it was done. If things have to be killed, it is just as well they should be struck dead by one blow as by a dozen."

"Ah, spare me! I know what I must have seemed to you, Gerard."

"You will always seem just what you are. I ought to have known, had I not been blinded by conceit." Then, noticing her hurried gesture of dissent: "Well, whatever it was, I should have known, and spared us both. But cannot you see that your pity, regret, or what else, is not likely to help me, and that it would, therefore, be better to leave it unsaid?"

"I only want to say a few words to—excuse myself, Gerard," she murmured, pleadingly. "I do not know how to say them aright; but I so much wish to say them."

"I can only warn you that if they are what women call words of comfort, I am afraid I shall swear."

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"It will comfort me to say them, that is all"—humbly. She waited a moment, and then went on hesitatingly: "Gerard, you recollect that night, when——"

"Oh, yes; I quite recollect"—grimly.

Would that look of pain and avoidance ever be effaced from his brain?

They heard the voices of some one approaching, and hurriedly drew apart. Not quickly enough! Mrs. Brandreth and Miss Hurst had turned from a side path and were advancing towards them. Both had seen Mabel's hand upon Gerard's arm, and their hurried movement apart.

Mrs. Brandreth felt that she had the gravest cause for displeasure, and did not hesitate to show what she felt. Had she not been assured that Miss Leith's previous walks with Mr. Harcourt had been brought about without any seeking or pre-arrangement on her side—in fine, at the bidding of Reginald—and that such a thing was not likely to occur again? And yet she was not only alone with him here, in the most unfrequented part of the park, but they were apparently in a very confidential and lover-like conversation. Was Miss Leith gaining or endeavouring to gain an influence over him? His bearing towards herself had certainly become different—that his increased respect was in fact more complimentary to her than had been his previous *empressement*, she did not recognize. Was Miss Leith to blame for the change? That he had at one time been inclined to declare himself, Mrs. Brandreth felt convinced.

"Did you arrive by the six o'clock train, Miss Leith?" she coldly asked.

"Yes," was all that in her confusion Mabel could reply.

"The roadway from the station would have been the more frequented, would it not?" sarcastically.

Mabel was trying to re-gather her wits, when Gerard took it upon himself to reply for her. "There must be no more fool's play. It was quite time now that Mabel took her right place among these people," he was thinking.

"I met Miss Leith at the station, Mrs. Brandreth. I went there for the purpose of seeing her safely back to the house, as she was unaccompanied by a maid, and I must plead guilty of having chosen the way she should come."

But he was not quite so cool and unembarrassed as he imagined himself to be, or he might not have omitted to state the one fact which would have opened her eyes as to Mabel's

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real position; consequently, he appeared to be merely setting opinion at nought.

Mrs. Brandreth felt herself insulted. To be treated in this way—put down, so to speak, and before Miss Hurst, to whom she had once or twice given a hint of Mr. Harcourt's attentions to herself, prettily affecting to have a little hesitation as to whether she would eventually accept him or not. But she saw that it would not be wise to ask Mabel for an explanation at that moment. If, as it seemed, the girl had been playing a double part, it might be possible to bring it home to her, but it would be necessary to set about it in the right way, so as to avoid at the same time bringing ridicule on herself. He, at any rate, must not be allowed to see how much she was annoyed. She turned away in dignified silence, wishing it to be understood that she had no more to say to Miss Leith, and left the two to their own devices.

But Miss Hurst kept up a little desultory talk with Gerard which obliged him to walk by her side, and, as she could not leave Miss Hurst, the four wended their way to the house together. Mabel walked silently on, too much absorbed in her own thoughts, a little confused though happy with the hope that her cruelty had not entirely killed Gerard's love, to notice that Mrs. Brandreth ostentatiously avoided looking towards or addressing her.

As they reached the terrace, and the other two passed on into the hall, Gerard turned towards Mabel, laying a restraining hand on her arm, "A moment, Mabel!"

But she had seen Mrs. Brandreth look back as she reached the hall, and murmur a word to Miss Hurst, and replied a little nervously: "Not now—to-morrow, Gerard."

"It must be now. Do not fear, it is only to say good-bye."

"Are you going to town? Then let me just say, how——"

"No; I could bear no more of that—— Can't you see, Mabel?" His eyes fastened upon her face a little wildly, as he grasped her hand more closely in his own.

"But I am so sorry, Gerard!"

"Say 'good-bye' to me, Mabel."

Good-bye to him! Never, never again! whitening at the bare thought, as she softly murmured: "Good-night, Gerard."

"Good-bye." He gently took her face between his hands, upturned it to meet her eyes, gazed solemnly into them for a moment, then, with a low "God keep you, Mabel!" turned away and went down the terrace steps again.

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"But you will come back to me," she was telling herself. "Oh, my love, my love, you will come back to me! Dorrie will make you understand, as I could not!"

As she passed through the hall, Mrs. Brandreth, who was standing at the open dining-room door, said a few words to the effect that she must see Miss Leith in the morning.

Mabel nodded. What did it matter now? What would anything matter when Gerard knew? He would know to-morrow! Oh, yes; Dorrie would understand, and soon enlighten him. All would be well to-morrow. He still cared for her, and she would soon be able to let him see what his caring meant to her. Yet there was an undercurrent of anxiety in her mind. He had looked so ill, and worse than ill. If he would only have allowed her to say a few words they might have shown him the mistake that had been made! Could she only have said she thought he had been Dorrie's lover!

Glad to be alone in her room, she was locking the door, when a slight movement warned her that some one was present, and looking round, she saw Lucy May sitting near the window, bending over her work.

"Mending my dress, Lucy? In tatters, was it not?" endeavouring to speak in her ordinary tone. She was longing to be alone; but she could not tell Lucy to go without some sort of preface.

"The frilling at the bottom had come unstitched, that is all, Miss Leith."

What had come to pretty Lucy? Pre-occupied as she was, Mabel could see that something had happened, and to judge by the shy, conscious, happy content in Lucy's eyes, something far from unwelcome.

"Do not stay any longer, Lucy. It is getting late, and Mr. Bloggs may be impatiently waiting for you."

Lucy reddened, and tossed her pretty head. "I wish he wouldn't be always waiting about for me, as he does. I'm sure I don't want him to; and so I've told him, over and over again. He says I made him think I cared, because I walked out with him a few times, when he put himself in the way; but I never said anything to make him think it. His ways are not a bit like——" She hesitated, a little confusedly.

"Mr. Aubyn thinks he would make a good husband, and that he seems likely to get on well."

"His ways are so common."

Mabel smiled. "His character is not. Mr. Aubyn thinks he

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is capable of great things, and has improved in all ways since he has known you. He is so much in earnest, too. I hope you will be able to like him by-and-by, Lucy."

"I do not dislike him, Miss Leith, but I do not care for him enough to marry him, and I never should. Besides—" hesitating a little, and then going on, with blushing cheeks and downcast eyes, "there's another reason."

"Another lover, do you mean, Lucy?"

"Yes," with a shy, upward glance. "Oh, miss, I should so much like to tell you, if only I might. As I say to him, you have always been so kind to me. But he says not yet."

"Of course you must not tell me if he wishes you not to do so, Lucy," mentally adding, in some surprise, "but why should he object to *my* knowing?"

"He's a gentleman, miss, and he's obliged to be very particular about our engagement being kept secret for the present, on account of his friends worrying him to death to marry a rich young lady, who is in love with him. I am sure I never put myself in his way, or so much as thought of such a thing, till I found him waiting about for me on my way home in the evening, and he began talking about having fallen in love with me. I wasn't too ready to believe, even then, for I know my place, and told him over and over again it wasn't likely such as him would care for me in that way. But he does, and says when I am his wife I am to have a carriage to ride about in, and satin dresses for every day, and jewels, and all sorts of beautiful things."

"You may not be any the happier for all that," gravely said Mabel, with some scorn for the man who could hold out such inducements, appealing to the weaknesses of the girl he was going to make his wife. She herself had, since finding that Mr. Aubyn was interested in Lucy on Bloggs' account, been doing her best for her, in the way of lending her books, and what not; but only to realize how entirely lacking in strength sweetness and amiability may be. "Riding about in a carriage," as she termed it, and being dressed in satin every day, was evidently quite sufficient in Lucy's estimation to render her a lady.

"What does your mother think of it, Lucy?"

"I have not told mother yet, Miss Leith. Mr. ——, I mean *he* says that I must not, until just as we are going to be married I've got to trust him in everything, and I'm sure I'm quite ready to. He must be good to marry a poor girl like me, when he could pick and choose among the highest in the land!"

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"That certainly ought to be in his favour," returned Mabel, though still a little doubtfully. "But I hope he will let you tell your mother soon."

"Oh, yes," assented Lucy, adding, with shy complacency: "I have taken notice of things more since I have walked out with Mr. —— him, and I am trying to learn ladies' ways."

"Only you must remember you will not learn them by wearing jewels and fine clothes. It was not right to talk of such things to you, Lucy. I hope you may not have to teach him to be a gentleman."

Lucy laughed, altogether failing to perceive the point of Mabel's well-intentioned little hint, proceeding to fold up her work, and put on her hat and cape.

As soon as she was alone, Mabel ensconced herself in the cushioned window-seat, and gave herself up to reflection upon what the day had brought her. To know that she had done Dorothy no wrong, however unintentionally—to know that Gerard was honourable and true;—above all, to be able to hope that her seeming unkindness had not killed his love. True, his tone and manner were different—terribly different—from what they had been that night on the terrace! To see that look in his eyes again; to hear that he loved her! "I wanted so much to make you understand to-night, Gerard; but how could I if you would not let me? You really might have helped me just a little, you know." Presently she was telling herself that he would soon know, without her assistance. Dorrie would make him understand, as she herself could not, and then—— Ah, Gerard, you will understand and forgive me, then! "How long would it be before he knew?" she wondered, counting up the hours. If he goes to town early in the morning, he might have time to see Dorrie, and get back to-morrow, perhaps, by catching the late train, or, if not, the morning after. "Yes, certainly the morning after, and, meantime, if you are very impatient you could telegraph just a word, which I should understand, you know. Only remember I am not a patient Grissel, and be quick. And then you will have to help me to make confession to Mrs. Brandreth. What must she think of me?" laughing softly to herself at the remembrance of the expression of that lady's face when she had come upon them in the woods. "But she will soon understand, now; I must promise that in the morning, or I shall be sent off in earnest this time, and have to return in disgrace instead of triumph. Besides, Reginald wants Dorothy and auntie to come

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here. Oh, Dorrie, to think of us two and those two being here together!"

In her excitement and expectancy she found herself the next morning quite unequal to keeping her attention to the lessons, and at length was fain to send a note to Mrs. Brandreth, asking her to allow Soames to take charge of the children for the rest of the day. She was so far answered that Soames came in to tell them that they were to go with her for a long morning in the woods. Mrs. Brandreth thought she quite understood what it was that had rendered the governess incapable of work that morning. She had carefully arranged a little plan in her mind for bringing home to Miss Leith her impropriety of the night before, and, as Reginald fortunately happened to be not on the spot this time, she thought she would be able to do what she wished without interference from him. But, after breakfast, news had been brought her by her maid, which not only came upon her as a great surprise, but caused her to entirely alter her tactics with regard to Miss Leith. No need now to point out the impropriety of the girl's secret meetings with Mr. Harcourt—that could be brought home to her in a more effectual way!

Mabel was lying back in a low chair, near the window, in her own room in pleasant reflection, counting up the hours and minutes that had still to be got through before her happiness came, when there was a tap at the door, and Mrs. Brandreth entered.

"I hear you are not well this morning, Miss Leith," she began, with a keen side-glance at the girl, and noticing with some surprise that, although a little pale and languid, she had a by no means disconsolate air.

"Oh, no, I am not ill, Mrs. Brandreth. I felt a little stupid this morning, and inclined for a hour or two's quiet; and thought you would not mind the children having a holiday, just for to-day; that is all."

But Mrs. Brandreth was not going to be put off that way. "I do not know what your relations with Mr. Harcourt are, Miss Leith," she coldly began, "but——"

"Relation," absently repeated Mabel. "We are not related; but we have known each other for years—since I was quite a child." What did it matter about the other knowing that much now?

"For years, and you have led me to suppose that you met here for the first time!"

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"I did not lead you to suppose it any further than not being explicit enough went. Things are not so bad as they seem to be, indeed they are not, Mrs. Brandreth. Everything will soon be explained to you, and then I hope—I think, you will be able to excuse me."

Mrs. Brandreth considered a little, then said, "You know, I suppose, that Mr. Harcourt left here last night." To her chagrin, he had left without leave-taking, further than by a note excusing the abruptness of his departure, with the plea of unexpectedly finding himself obliged to return to town, and being desirous to catch the late up train.

"I thought he meant to go this morning," a little confusedly murmured Mabel.

"Do you know who has accompanied him?"

"Mr. Aubyn? I thought he left yesterday."

"Oh, no; Lucy May."

"Lucy May!" ejaculated Mabel, rising to her feet, and gazing at the other with wide eyes.

"She did not know then!" was Mrs. Brandreth's swift thought. "Yes; it seems he has been acting in a not very honourable way since he has been here. I hear that he has been having clandestine meetings with her also, and turning her head with his flattery and false pretences."

"Gerard? Oh, absurd, impossible!"

"Gerard, indeed!" thought Mrs. Brandreth, adding to Mabel, "I can only tell you Lucy May is missing this morning, and has left a letter for her mother saying that she has gone with Mr. Harcourt."

"Quite impossible!"

"I do not know what evidence would convince you, if the girl's own statement would not, Miss Leith."

"Nothing would convince me!"

Suddenly she fell back, gazing at the other with dismayed eyes. The remembrance of Lucy's communication the night before had flashed upon her. Had not Lucy talked about going to be married to a rich man—a gentleman? Was it possible her scorn of his love had driven him to this? Gerard driven to do anything he did not choose to do! No; a thousand times No!

"Of course she imagines he is going to marry her, since he promised to do so, poor simpleton!"

"If he promised, he would. Yes, before the whole world

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You do not know him if you suppose he cares for what the world may say. But he has not; no, impossible!"

"The promise would not surprise me so much as his choosing to marry Miss Lucy May"—with a cold smile. "But you may know what his taste is better than I do."

"I know he is a gentleman."

Mrs. Brandreth smiled softly. "You do not understand much of the world if you think that he is therefore ready to marry Lucy May."

"I do not know what others are, but I know what he is," with quiet decision.

"And you think he will marry her?"

"If he had promised, I know he would marry her;" whitening to the lips and with a little catch of the breath.

Mrs. Brandreth was quick to note the signs. At last she had found where the girl could be touched. "And I was really under the impression that you cared for him yourself!"

The colour rushed to Mabel's cheeks again, but her eyes met the other's. "I do. It is because I care for him, that I would have him marry her, if—if—— But he has not—I know him!"

"Very romantic and pretty of you. But if Lucy May has been so foolish as to trust to his promises, she will, I imagine, have to take the consequences of her folly. There always have been, and always will be Lucy Mays in the world, I suppose," smiling complacently at her rings, as she turned her hand about to catch the light upon them.

"And women who smile at their downfall!" hotly ejaculated Mabel. "Oh, the shame of it, the shame of it! How can you speak in that way—how dare you smile? How dare you?"

"Really, Miss Leith!"

Mabel sank down into a chair, covering her face with her trembling hands, and Mrs. Brandreth went on: "I must try to make allowance for one smarting under a disappointment, and I hope that, on a little reflection, you will see you have gone too far. As to the rest, I must consult Mr. Aubyn."

"Yes, that will be best; I leave everything to him," returned Mabel.

With a slight flush on her faded cheeks, and a smile harder if possible than usual on her thin lips, Mrs. Brandreth swept out of the room. It had been all very well to talk of consulting Reginald, but experience had taught her that, though appearances might be kept up between them, it was not she who

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came off victorious in their encounters. And was not the girl's very readiness to leave everything to him, as she termed it, ominous? Of course she might set her brother-in-law at defiance. It was quite open to her to send Miss Leith away whenever she chose. But could she afford to set his wishes at nought in that way? Would it be good policy to do so; to say nothing of the difficulty of finding another governess ready to accept such terms as she offered? She was becoming more and more convinced that when the explanation Miss Leith talked about was forthcoming, it would not tell against her, and that Reginald knew it would not. The girl had taken him into her confidence, and his very partisanship was proof that there was nothing really against her.

Mabel was watching for a letter with feverish anxiety now. She strove to persuade herself of the utter impossibility of Gerard having given a thought to Lucy May, and this not against her reason. Because he imagined the one girl was not to be won, to transfer his love to another in so short a time, and this one Lucy May—Gerard, with his almost fastidious notions about women—Gerard in love with Lucy May! Ah, no, it would be disloyal to think it. It would all prove to have been some stupid mistake; it must. Yet she was painfully conscious the while of an undercurrent of fear in her mind. It was not only what Mrs. Brandreth had told her, but what Lucy herself had said, that seemed so terribly significant. She fancied, too, that Soames looked gravely and anxiously at her. Had the story already got about; had the servants heard it? "Does she know, and does she suspect how unwelcome the news would be to me?" thought Mabel. "Is that why she says no word to me about it?"

When the next morning a letter was put into her hand, the blood rushed tumultuously to her face, then as quickly died out of it again. From Dorothy! For the first time, the sight of her sister's handwriting brought disappointment. But she presently remembered that the letter might contain news of Gerard, and hurriedly broke open the envelope. The feeling of disappointment returned, deepening as she read. A chatty affectionate letter, full of the usual subjects that had no interest for her at that moment. Dorothy appeared to take everything pleasant and desirable for granted, and only made one allusion to Gerard, who she seemed to imagine was still at Beechwoods. He had not yet gone to Kensington then, and there could not have been the exchange of confidences Mabel had hoped might come about. She hardly knew whether she wished it might come about now.

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It might be better that he should never know. Her love could be nothing to Lucy's husband. "Lucy's husband! Oh, Gerard, if it should really come to that!"

All this notwithstanding, she had not so entirely lost hope as to have ceased to watch for the postman. Each time she saw the man come up the drive with the letter-bag her heart beat high with hope, only to sink again as she found he brought nothing for her. How long seemed the hours between the arrivals of the letter-bag! How eager and alert she was when it came; and how desponding when she found it contained no letter for her! Another day passed slowly and drearily away. Still no tidings came, and Lucy's absence tended to confirm her fears.

She was not, however, too self-absorbed to be regardless or unappreciative of the kindness of Soames and the children. The latter, imagining that the change they observed in her was to be attributed to her being out of health and spirits, vied with each other in endeavouring to cheer and interest her. Mima expended some of her pocket-money upon goodies at the little Braydon shop, explaining that some of the sweets had been nibbled for the purpose of making quite sure that they were good enough to offer dear Miss Leith. Algy made up a fairy story expressly for her, considerately beginning in the middle to make it quite clear to her. Sissy did her best in characteristic fashion, spending a whole morning in battling with the difficulties—very real ones to her—of translating a French fable, in order to do her governess some credit.

Meanwhile, Soames hovered about Mabel, anticipating her wants, and doing all that lay in her power to help with the children. The aspect of things had been for some time improving for her; Mabel having taught the children to do all sorts of kindly offices for Soames, appealing to her in the only way she could be touched. They were quick now to recognize her little acts of kindness to the governess. Altogether, life was beginning to have a new meaning for Soames. She was always welcome in the schoolroom now, and taken into the children's confidence about their pleasures, while little surprises were planned for her; wonderful offerings from fairy-land mysteriously finding their way to her room. Moreover, she was now invited to bring her needlework into the schoolroom during the hours before bed-time, to be present at the evening's story-telling or games, because she entered so heartily into the spirit of it all. No cross looks

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nor displays of temper now when they were left to her sole charge. They went merrily off for a walk with her, and ended up at night with the assertion that it was delightful to be with dear old Soames now; informing her that Miss Leith had been quite right, she *was* nice, and it was their own fault that they had not found it out sooner. There was another and even more delightful cause for the smiles that now brightened Soames' face. Mr. Harcourt's man Wright and she had come to the agreeable conclusion that they were intended for each other, and had agreed to be made one as soon as their united savings amounted to sufficient to enable them to purchase the good-will of some business. In fine, Soames was a happy woman, and ascribed all her good fortune to the arrival of Miss Leith at Beechwoods.

With the remembrance of her previous experience in that way, Mrs. Brandreth approached the subject of Miss Leith very carefully and tentatively now with her brother-in-law. That he was in the girl's confidence, and prepared to uphold her in what she might choose to do, Miss Leith herself had given her the strongest reasons for believing, and the way in which he listened to what she had to tell more than confirmed her suspicions.

He appeared neither shocked nor surprised, merely replying, in a matter-of-course tone, that if Miss Leith said she had known Harcourt for years, that was enough.

"There could be nothing wrong in walking from the railway-station with an old friend, if she happened to meet him, you know, Agatha," he replied, wondering how much more Mabel had said, but restrained by the remembrance of his promise from volunteering information without her permission. The last time they had met, Mabel had seemed to object more than ever to the real facts being just then known to Agatha, though she had pleaded for only a few days' delay.

"You were aware what was going on when Miss Leith first came, and that was why Mr. Harcourt was invited, I expect."

"No; I was not even aware they knew each other."

She reflected a moment. Had he heard the story about Lucy May? Should she tell him? It would have been a real pleasure to do so; but, by waiting awhile and letting the news reach him through others, she would be able afterwards to take a high moral tone about not caring to enter into such subjects—not imagining his friend could be guilty of such conduct, and under his roof, and so forth. Yes; she would bide her time, and not strike till the right moment came.

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"Well, I must wait until Miss Leith chooses to enlighten me as to her doings and motives, I suppose. She promises to do that—when it suits her. Meantime, the air is full of mystery, and I am the one to be mystified, it seems."

"I do not like mysteries, any more than you do, Agatha; and I think Miss Leith will be ready enough to explain, or let me explain for her, very soon."

After a few moments' thought, he decided that she should, at any rate, hear the truth about himself and Dorothy; and in a few quiet words informed her that he was engaged to a young girl she had not seen, only omitting to mention her name. But the omission was unnoticed, as she reeled for a moment under the blow, all the colour that could fade leaving her face.

"Engaged! To—to—the heiress?" she faltered out, hardly conscious of what she said.

"Yes, she is rich," he replied, with a half smile, seeing that her thoughts were reverting to what he had previously told her. "It is early days yet; but you shall hear all about it very shortly." Adding, as he noticed her look of disappointment and dismay, and partly guessed the cause, "But one thing I will say at once; you may depend upon me to do my best for you and yours when you leave this place. I have been thinking that you might probably like to reside at the Dower House while the children are young; and if so, I will see that it is put into good repair and refurnished. In any case, I intend to charge myself with Algy's education, and make a substantial addition to your income."

She was speechless, all thought of the governess and Mr. Harcourt and his doings driven out of her mind by the terrible news. The prospect of having a good addition to her income, and the Dower House rent free and newly furnished, was as much—more than she could have expected, had she contemplated the possibility of her brother-in-law marrying. But this she had not done. She had indeed so long indulged in the belief that Beechwoods, and everything else he possessed, would eventually come to her children, that the news of his contemplated marriage came upon her as a shock. She presently contrived to murmur a few words which might mean something like congratulation; but in her self-absorption she omitted to enquire who his *fiancée* was, and what was her name. She sat pondering over the unwelcome news, long after he had left her; remembering now how little he had really told, nothing about her or her people beyond the fact that she was rich, not even

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mentioning her name, and his silence seemed so very expressive. Naturally he would have been ready enough to say more had there been anything to be proud of. "Most probably the daughter of some rich nobody, who, in her ambition to secure a husband of birth and position, had approached Reginald on his weak side, by going amongst the people he was interested in," argued Mrs. Brandreth, according to her lights.

He had contrived to make her understand that it would be as well to take his word that everything would be satisfactorily explained in a few days, and that in the meantime it was worth her while to discover that Miss Leith required a little rest and relaxation. She did not even trouble herself to solve the question why he should continue to interest himself in the governess's welfare; that was for his future wife to consider. It was sufficient to find that her readiness to take his tone was rewarded in a manner so entirely satisfactory. A cheque for a good round sum was put into her hand, with the smiling intimation that she would doubtlessly find a use for it. She did not even trouble herself to speculate as to the significance of his raised colour, and the slight hesitation with which he spoke, in his qualms of conscience at gaining her good-will in that way.

A holiday was proclaimed for governess and pupils, and walks and drives arranged for them. Meanwhile Aubyn and Dorothy had exchanged confidences, and neither had any fears on the score either of Gerard or Mabel in the future. "I have only to say a few words to him, and all will be right," thought Aubyn.

(*To be continued.*)

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A FALLEN QUEEN.

"Poetica e maravigliosa Venezia!"—BROCCA.

I AM in Venice. What to say of it? It is not the wave-throned city of my old thoughts—mysterious and gorgeous, wearing the red of hidden crime and magnificent victory; the city of the Council of Ten, the Bridge of Sighs, the Lion's Mouth and the Black Gondola; the city of Byron's Marino Faliero, of Shakespeare's Shylock and Portia; the city of Giorgione and Titian, of Dandolo and Loredan. It is a city of palaces still, but palaces which, no longer the homes of a haughty aristocracy, are decayed to sheer dilapidation, or degraded to the state of hotels, manufactories, and houses where furnished apartments are let to the sight-seeing forestieri. It is a city of commerce still, but no longer the mart of Europe. It is still beautiful, but with the wistful beauty of a woman no longer in her prime. She who used to choose her lovers amongst kings, her servants amongst captive princes, now stoops to welcome the plebeian herds which come to stare where once men came to kneel. She who once pageanted with sumptuous pomp victorious Doges returning trophy-laden, now decks her fading graces to attract the tourists' needed gold. She is a beautiful queen whom evil days have made a wanton.

We tried one albergo after another, and liked none—from the "Britannia," with its pretence of English style to catch the English tourists, to the "Milan," where we had an eyrie up in the roof—a corner round which the shrieking swifts wheeled at dawn and dusk, and from which we could sweep the canal up and down to the far lagoon, while opposite rose the grand domed Salute upon its stately steps. We tried one gondolier after another, wicked old *vecchio* and flighty *giovine*, finding that one made us jolt and that another made us roll, while Carlo, the

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best stroke of all, eloped one night with another famiglia! However we found a home in the Palazzo Barbarigo, still in sight of the great church, and a gondolier of matchless virtues in Pasquale, for whom we drove wicked Carlo away when he came wheedling back to find fresh favour. We have eaten ices at Florian's when the huge Piazza di San Marco, bounded on three sides with palaces, and on the fourth by the grace of the Byzantine church's domes, was roofed with stars and filled with music—the rendezvous of Venice. We have seen the thousand pigeons of San Marco, descended from those which carried Dandolo's message of triumph from Candia, whirl into mid-air as the bell of the clock-tower up which Napoleon rode his horse tolled noon. We have lain in gondola below the Bridge of Sighs, the mighty walls of the Doge's palace and the prison rising to the night-sky, confronting each other, black and relentless, above the narrow and mysterious waterway. We have watched on these walls the shadows of those who pass across the Ponte della Paglia, vanishing, as all the figures of the city's giant sons have vanished, in obscurer night. We have passed through the palace—though I had no sense of its identity with what it witnessed to, being shown through it instead of entering by the Scala d'Oro, as one whose name shone in the Golden Book—seen the Giant Staircase, down whose steps the head of traitorous Faliero bounded, that head which had been crowned more proudly than a king's upon the landing from which it rolled so low; the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, in whose frieze the unfinished series of the Doges' portraits show—a line of empty panels from the time when virginal Venice yielded to her first and greatest captor—amongst them the black square, across which is written in white letters: "Hic est locus Marini Falethri decapitati pro criminibus;" the balcony from which each fresh Doge was proclaimed to listening Venice; the two red pillars from between which the sentences of death of the Republic were announced; the scar, upon the wall beside the entrance to the Sala della Bussola, left by the lion's head, the sinister Bocca di Leone into which secret denunciations were thrown; the Stanza dei Tre Capi del Consiglio, whose walls have heard what no man but the Three ever listened to and lived; the Sala delle Quattro Porte, with its sumptuous ceiling; and, like the hand of iron gaunt and black beneath the velvet glove, the dungeons where prisoners of state were shut. These dark ways and walled-up stairs; these stony holes where men lay thinking of the steel which was worse

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than stone ; these deadly smells, as if blood shed three centuries back still clotted rotting there ; this angle where the condemned knelt, and a slope in the floor led the blood towards a sink in the flags, whence it dripped down to the dark canal ; and finally, barred like the dungeon it led from, closed like the tomb it led towards, menacing symbol of despair and death, the Bridge of Sighs!

And San Marco, the fairest of churches? A dream of pale marble and gold mosaic, as if through magical summers moonlight had slept on it and sunlight kissed it. Figures of domes and portals ; slender pinnacles ; columns of strange and tinted marbles, quarried in strange and distant lands. Columns whose capitals rise in a maze of stony fantasies ; arches within which saintly figures glow in colours on a ground of gold ; domes whose shining concaves canopy the great basilica whose floors are all mosaic. Doors, candelabra, and reliefs in bronze ; statues, sarcophagus and font in bronze ; and above the grand portal the Bronze Horses, gilded till they shine like the splendid Horses of the Sun, which pranced on the triumphal arches of Nero, Trajan, and Napoleon. Stones mysterious and historical are here : that on which the head of John the Baptist lay before it reached the charger of Salome ; those which commemorate the reconciliation here before the Doge of Pope and Emperor ; and spiral alabaster columns, pallid and opaque, from the Temple of Solomon.

The Grand Canal's great S divides the city, which lies in the shape of a pair of hands about to clasp. To the south it widens down towards the Lido, leaving the deep and spacious Canale Giudecca, with its heavy shipping, on the right, and on the left the Palace of the Doges, whose square front dominates the broadening reach of water. Along the canal rise the sumptuous dwellings of the Venice of the past, before which groups of painted posts, emerging from the water, stand. These used to bear the cognizances of the families who owned them, and gave rise to the boast—"Ho uno palazzo con pali sulla riva." Like the façades behind them, they are various in size and style ; there remain one or two palazzi, where the vecchie famiglie linger, whose pali proudly bear the Doge's cap. Again, some are crested with a group of figures richly gilt ; but these draw attention to the show-rooms of a manufacturer of glass or lace. Three styles predominate in the façades ; the most imposing is the stern Renaissance, built of huge marble blocks

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grown black with time, and facetted about its base; portals and windows grandly arched, above which masks of gods and satyrs frown, and whose balustraded balconies borne by pillars traverse it from end to end. The most graceful is the Pointed style of the 14th century; ornate with carvings and coloured marbles, richly worked as a mosaic; to each narrow lofty window a square balcony whose corners bear armed heads in stone, and which is supported by chimeras' faces—immovable, out-gazing visages, whose meagre numbers here replace the broad-browed deities which crowd the other bolder front. The third is the Lombardi, which lacks both the grandeur of the best Renaissance style and the fantasy of the Pointed; but, with the severity of one's arched apertures, the other's coquetry of tinted stones, connects them. Here and there a palazzo has its story, which the gondolier squats down behind your seat and tells you while the gondola drifts past. From our windows one is seen, the Palazzo Venier, a noble basement of stainless marble with eight great windows and three great doors, a balustraded terrace leading by a flight of steps down to the water, and under the windows mighty lions' heads reflecting themselves in the canal. The edifice was left unfinished because two brothers, now two centuries ago, could not agree about its plan. One of them reared a lion-cub whose head he represented in stone upon his house's front, from which its popular name has come—Palazzo de' Leoni. Now the roofless incompleteness of it is a garden green with trees; red Judas-flowers hang across the iron gates their cornucopias of poisoned honey, and cypresses, like giant mourners of the days and dreams of long ago, stand dark behind, the strength of two centuries of summer hoarded in their roots. Further, on our side, the right, of the canal, stands the Casa Faliero: here the Doge's wretched wife took refuge when he was beheaded. A Palazzo in the 15th-century Pointed style belongs to an Italian baron as wealthy as eccentric, the story of whose father is a hideous romance, like a savage legend of the Middle Ages. He saw in one of his remote estates a girl whom he coveted. She was low-born, beautiful and chaste. Infuriate at her resistance, he walled her up alive in his chateau. When years had passed the tragedy was brought to light. He was confined for life to one of his castles for the crime; his gold and rank enabled him to shirk the prison and the scaffold. The Cà del Duca shows columns half-reared and a basement of facetted stone, above which rises with incongruous effect a small mean-looking house.

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Here should have stood a palace, built for the Duke of Milan, but its completion was forbidden by the Republic after his conspiracy and flight. The Palazzo Grimani, Sanmicheli's masterpiece, shows huge arched windows of which a tale is told. The Grimani demanded the hand of the daughter of the Tiepŏli for their son. The Tiepŏli, believing that their neighbours were not wealthy enough to pretend to this alliance, answered: "When you shall build a palazzo whose windows are as large as our front door." The Grimani forthwith began to build; the fabric rose; the lovers were made happy. It is now the Corte d'Appello; but I, who have pictured the anxious and happy watching of the two while stone was laid on stone, the flight of the love-birds to their longed-for nest at last, am sure that two sweet phantoms haunt by night the spacious scene of sweet lost love.

Towards the western end of the Grand Canal, where its romance is lost in the prosaic actuality of the railway station, one turns to the right down the Canareggio, passing the Old Ghetto's towering rookery, and enters, through the crowded quarter of San Giobbe, the lagoon. Beyond the reach of water, mountains rise, a cloud-like range against the sunset. Towards them leads the great bridge of the Mestre, Venezia's only link to *terra firma*, stretching its black gossamer across a field of flame and emerald. Against the Parthian arrows of the sun the moon lifts high her argent shield; the sky's blue dome is lit with stars; a train, far off, coming over the bridge, steals on, staring redly with its Cyclopean eye; the beasts in the macelli pubblici low mournfully to each other; the stakes which mark the channels stand like giants wading middle-deep; the evening star sinks, faithful to the sun, amongst the fading embers of his glory; night has fallen. The gondola, swimming slowly and softly, glides back into the Grand Canal. The façades of the old palazzi reach away white and weird under the moon. The water whispers to their steps of feet gone past; the sad wind whispers to their walls of sweet words spoken. Down the deserted space of great dark chambers something pallid glides; is it a moon-beam or a phantom?

Besides the Grand Canal and all its tributary rii, Venice has calli and campi. The rii are the narrow waterways which wind between the houses; overhung by ancient walls above which waving branches show, antique stone balconies made bright with blushing oleander blossoms, sometimes whole dark façades, from which unchangeable stone heads look down. The calli are

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narrower lanes, paved with broad blocks, which intersect each other, carried by means of bridges across the gondola-haunted rii. The campi are open spaces, sometimes paved, more often grass-grown, where children play, youths idle, women chat, and, when the festa of the parish saint comes round, his day is honoured with music, dancing, eating, drinking, and the light of coloured lamps. Besides the Bridge of Sighs and the Rialto, the two most famous bridges of the world in beauty and romance, Venice possesses nearly half a thousand ponti, some high, some low, but all enough raised to let the tall ferro of the gondola pass under, and bearing on their stone arcs stone shields sculptured with the cognizances of great families extinct, or, set at intervals, strange heads, of men or monsters, beasts or demons. Sometimes bosses of facetted stone show instead of these guardian faces; as if souls caged behind these masks, and watching century on century the scene of their old crimes, had broken forth some gracious night, being penitent, and left the stone which they gave shape to merely stone.

To the charm of picturesque aspects is added the charm of romantic names. Every stone in Venice has its story, and the name of every ponte, calle, rio, recalls the past. Tender or tragic legends confront one from the walls as their stone faces, grim or smiling, do. Here, behind the palazzi at the first bend of the Grand Canal, lies the Ponte de' Donna Onesta. In the days of the Doges there lived a young armourer here with his beautiful wife. A noble, who had seen her and conceived a passion for her, entered the smithy on pretext of ordering a dagger to be made. On the day when it was to be ready he returned during her husband's absence. He asked if the weapon was finished, and she showed him its keen and stainless blade. He spoke of love, and she repulsed him, thinking of the lover-husband she adored. Enraged, he struggled with her. She was alone in the lonely house. . . . At last, with the desperate cry: "You may overpower me, but you shall never conquer me!" she drove through her valiant heart the knife the hands she loved had made. Again, at the end of a mysterious waterway, so forgotten that no gondola but ours, perhaps, had glided through for weeks, stood the houses of a Romeo and Juliet of Venice—Bianca Capello and Buonaventuri. Here he used to come to her window, along the canal-side and over the bridge; and here, with his garden wall in sight, she used to wait for him. One night they fled to Tuscany, and there he married her. In the end, for

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the ways of life and fate are strange, he died, and she, in the height of her beauty, became the Tuscan Grand Duke's wife, Now, at the end of this mysterious waterway, forgotten and forsaken, the old palazzi, remembering the first, best part of this marred romance, still stand. The Palazzo Tamossi has a tragedy in its past which is somberest of all. In the days when Venice suspected Spain of intrigues against the Republic, Antonio Foscarini was the lover of an Englishwoman, General Arnold's wife. One night, in danger of discovery, he was compelled to leap from a window to the courtyard, and thence scale a wall to reach the street. The Spanish Embassy was near, surrounded by spies on the alert. These, seeing him descend, arrested him as a conspirator. He was confined to the dungeons of the Ducal Palace, and put to the question. Nothing could extort from him the secret of his flight, and he was condemned to death. He suffered, stedfastly silent to the end, and his mistress was also silent. Two years passed, and on her death-bed she confessed at last the story of the fatal night. It was too late to give back life, hope, strength, love, youth, and beauty, but not too late to restore to honour his name who had died for honour's sake. The Republic proclaimed to the sovereigns of Europe that Foscarini had suffered innocently.

At intervals along the Grand Canal and amongst the waterways exist traghetti: here the gondole gather, and the gondoliers quarrel or sleep all day. The men are dressed in white trousers, a blue shirt, a scarf wound round the waist, and a straw hat. They are poppieri or provieri according to their position in the boat; but commonly one rower only guides the gondola, standing upon the poppa. Private gondole are seen, rowed swiftly by handsome youths in white with gorgeous sashes, the property of the rich Jewish, English, or German residents, many of whom are bankers. For the last eight years an enemy has harassed the gondole, and brought down the gondolier's earnings from six or eight lire a day to two or three. This is the tribe of "maledetti vaporetti": the steamboats which rush from station to station up and down the Grand Canal, shrieking warnings from brazen lungs to the timorous wooden craft, disturbing the water till it dashes in waves that shake their walls against the steps of the palazzi, dispelling that illusion which veils Venice in the magic mantle of her past; putting one, no matter how skilled the gondolier, in constant danger of his life; and carrying innumerable passengers whose fare

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is ten centesimi each. The lives of the gondole are shortened four years by the shock of angry waters as the steamboats pass, and one often hears the rower breathing grim and mighty curses at this dragon there is no saint left to kill. There are many species of boats on Venetian waters besides the gondola : barca, batella, topo —named so because it resembles the shape of a rat's head—burchio, peata, sandolo. Sometimes a line of barges stops one's gondola amongst the piccoli canali, slow-moving, heavy, laden with fruit for the Erberia, with water to be pumped into some old palazzo's cistern, with wood, with casks of wine. But none of these craft have the gondola's grace ; the long curves, slim shape, rising prow, of the black swan of the lagoons.

And now, when flaming sunsets and white-haloed moons herald the heats of August, the canals, though limpets line their sides on which crabs crawl, and rats swim slyly down them, at dusk become alive with bands of bathers, boys and girls. In the quiet rii, where a dim arched door gives on the water, a smiling mother stands, her little ones splashing together at her feet, while she watches the youngest learn to swim, held safe by a cord around its waist. In the crowded fondamente lads plunge in and shout and splutter, diving from the barges or the water-steps like so many larger frogs. In the Grand Canal they bathe from the traghetti in noisy hordes ; leaping in, and scrambling out to leap again, while twilight falls and the hundred campanili of the churches grow vociferous, proclaiming vespers.

Venice is said to be a silent city, because it never echoes hoof or wheel. To me it seems silent only in the darkest watches of the night. There is perpetual activity ; the gondoliers wrangle together as they wait for fares on the traghetti ; the clocks, each keeping different time from the others, strike the hours and all the quarters ; the steamboats puffing by with a scream ; vendors of fowls and melons pass in sandoli calling their wares ; the piteous band of scrofulous children coming singing back from their Lido baths ; a cannon is always fired at noon from San Giorgio Maggiore ; the bells of the churches ring for every office day and night ; the swifts shriek keenly at dawn and sunset, black against the fair east or the opal west ; and in the evening boats hung with coloured lamps glide up and down, filled with musicians.

One of the great Venetian feste is that of the Redentore. Every year since 1573 it has commemorated the city's thanks-giving for the cessation of the plague. The Doge Mocenigo built on La Giudecca the Church of the Redentore, to the steps

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of which, that the devout may come more easily, a pontoon bridge is made. Another spans the Grand Canal, and these permit the pilgrims to approach on foot, the number of them being so great that boats enough could not be found to bear them. The festa lasts three days, beginning on the 19th of July: on the first day the veglia, when the city goes in serenade; on the second the festa, when all make their devotions; and on the third the Piccolo Redentore, when those of the poor who have been too busy to take part in the great festa make a little festa of their own. When our gondola entered the Giudecca at half-past 9 o'clock, the veglia had begun, and night had fallen. The sky was moonless, but the stars were out —the stars, which the gondoliers believe are all the saints, so bright because they are so holy. Below, the broad calm of the great canal stretched, shining with a myriad lights, reflecting the blue and red and green of the lanterns which hung the boats, and bearing a flotilla in which all Venice seemed to have taken to the water. There was to be a prize for the barca most tastefully decorated. Gondola and sandolo as usual fell foul of each other everywhere; the contemptuous challenge "Sandolo!" was constantly heard from behind proud ferri, and the pushing low snouts of the plebeian boats made way unwillingly for haughty prows. From riva to riva the floating scene was variety, vivacity, brilliancy. All the botteghe were open, the meagre shops of this poor quarter, and outside the houses itinerant vendors had spread their wares on stands. Two or three of these were glorious with brass piatti arranged to form a background to the stall, some huge as shields, some small, some old, some new, bearing in relief the portrait of a doge or the scene of an antique forgotten battle. Here, on a board, lay a regiment of scrawny heads and necks of fowls and geese fried brown in batter; there on a tray, the meagre bodies they belonged to, roasted, hard and polished as if carved of wood. Frittelle, little cakes of plums and batter; saucers of fruit preserved in wine; shoals of small fried fish, "sfogi in saor"; bunches of fenocio, a green flowering herb of pleasant flavour, always eaten at this festa; thousands of garusoli, an Italian periwinkle which inhabits an ornamental shell garnished with spines; mulberries, served by leavesful, crushed with their own lusciousness; gingerbread in moons and circles, set with almonds; water, flavoured with some drops of syrup shaken from one of the vendor's many bottles; soup, no doubt of very strange com-

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ponents, in a tub; hard confections in sticks and drops for the swarming fanciulli; boiled bovoli, a creature like a miniature cuttlefish, of horrid aspect; these were the delicacies peculiar to the Redentore. Besides, there were fruit-stands loaded with peaches, plums, young pears, huge apples, the last cherries; birrarie where the men drank thin red wine of Italy or German beer. Every bottega had its coloured lanterns, even if but of the rudest kind, besides oil-lamps with dingy chimneys, and flaring naphtha torches. The crowds on the riva jostled up and down, ascending and descending the bridges which connect one fondamenta with another; the men short, fragile, bloodless-looking: languid but irritable; many showing twisted and shortened limbs, dwarfed frames and scrofulous skins, those marks of decadence so hideously prevalent in Northern Italy; the women healthier but not robust; and all producing the effect of picturesqueness rather through their garments' grace and various colourings than through their personal beauty of face or form or dignity of bearing. Besides the crowds on the riva of the Giudecca were multitudes upon the bridge; multitudes whose movement stopped when a burst of rockets made the sky like the water swarm with tinted sparks. Half an hour after midnight we left the scene; the fireworks had ceased; the band no longer played; they were putting out the host of green and crimson lamps; the official portion of the festa was performed. There remained, however, the barche, their lamps a little torn, their bowers of green a little faded, but loaded with revellers, who ate and drank round the tables spread within. The sandoli, also, stayed, bearing humbler banqueteers in shirts and shawls, the prose of whose life of labour feste of bovoli tinged with transient romance. The botteghi were open all night; the singing-boats full of musicians, whose coloured lights no longer rendered them conspicuous, took the place of the galleggiante, now silent and extinct; a lantern caught fire here and there, and was extinguished amidst redoubled laughter. At dawn the whole festal flotilla sailed off to the Lido to see the sun rise. The Vigil of the Redentore ended radiantly as it had begun.

The memory of gala Venice seen by night is followed by the memory of her greatest daylight festa. This is the Regatta, a relic of the days of her supremacy. From the balcony of the Ducal Palace fronting the Bacino di San Marco, the family of the reigning Doge were accustomed to witness it each year. The gondoliers are chosen by lot amongst the men of the traghetti.

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The gondoline start from the Giardini Pubblici, laid out by Napoleon on the site of two demolished monasteries, pass the Piazzetta, traverse the length of the Grand Canal, and, having turned the pole which marks the course's end, return to receive the prizes at the Palazzo Foscari. Venice was white as a bride upon her jade throne of green waters. The Grand Canal drew to its banks every element of the city's life; the span of the distant Rialto showed a black line which, nearer, proved a mass of heads. From the windows of the houses coloured stuffs were hung; from the balconies of the palazzi breadths of brocade or antique tapestries. Below, the pali showed their painted stakes —blue, red, green, ringed, or striped. Between these banks of marble flecked with colour, sailed four barques, rose, canary, azure, and maroon. They were gala with gilding and gauze and silk, and garlanded with flowers. Their crews were costumed in different sumptuous fashions of times past, recalling the habit of the Nobili to rival each other in the splendour of their equipages, a custom which caused such jealousy and strife that the Doge Marino Grimani in the 15th century ordered every gondola in Venice but his own to be painted black, since when they have remained so. These graceful barques, which seemed to have sailed up the stream of time from the seas of the past, ranged themselves at the bend of the canal before the Palazzo Foscari. Here, between the Palazzo Balbi and that of the most glorious and unhappy of the Doges, was the platform of the prize-givers. It was draped with fabrics striped pink and blue, and garnished with flowers and flags; around it swarmed every boat which could force an entry or find a place. Here was a barca in which half-a-dozen of the populace sat drinking wine and smoking cigarettes of rank tobacco: there the private gondola of one of the last survivors of the ancient aristocracy, a flag at the prow which bore his house's cognizance, a band with a silver coronet upon the arm of each gondolier, and a beautiful woman, his wife, beside him, wearing a bonnet whose shape resembled coquettishly that of the ducal cap. The vigilanti, in their hideous uniforms and hats, made vigorous efforts to keep order, skirmishing in and out amongst this singularly varied company. The Syndic arrived at the steps of the platform in a barca with four rowers in dark blue, on which the band played the royal march with a feeble brassy din. The fairy-like barques brought each an official whose broadcloth looked rudely incongruous under their aërial canopies.

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The padrini appeared, at whose head was Pasquale d'Este, our own gondolier. All was ready, and the cannon of San Giorgio Maggiore gave the signal. Soon a roar from the crowds which filled windows and water-steps, boats and balconies, was heard, and along the green way between the fleets of gondole, the nine gondoline swept. White, orange, rose, azure, crimson, turquoise, yellow, violet, green, darted by, slim, toylike, the rowers' collars and sashes bright with the colours of their boats. The sound of enthusiasm, like a gust of wind, blew onward down the Canal. Those who had risen in the boats resumed their seats: the whole assemblage waited. Twenty minutes later a fresh tumult began. "Bianco, bianco!" they shouted. The white gondolina slid up to the steps of the platform, guided by the men in white, and Pasquale, as padrino, had the pride of handing the first prize to his own young nephews. Yellow and green followed these, and fourth the red, to whom, besides the bandiera and the lire of their prize, was handed down by the ears a little pig, the piccolo maiale of tradition, whose squeals made the multitude roar with glee from one end of the Canal Grande to the other. Then, as if suddenly caught by a storm, the gathering of gondole, sandoli, and barche began to move, perturbing the water with a thousand oars, the air with the cries of the rowers. The festa was ended; they dispersed tumultuously to seek the cool of the lagoons.

The blue day died in pearly twilight. Venice slept, clothed in the mourning of night, and haunted with dreams of lost imperialty.

LAURA DAINTREY.

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GLIMPSES OF BYRON,

WITH SOME REFLECTIONS ON THEM.

BY THE REV. HENRY HAYMAN, D.D.

AN elderly friend of my youth, since gone his way to "the great majority," was born in the same year as Lord Byron the poet, and made the Academic course concurrently—or nearly so—with him. Among incidents of his College days he vividly recalled the young peer's pet bear—that "rough customer" for the Dons, but especially for

> "Unlucky Tavell! doomed to daily cares
> By pugilistic pupils and by bears."*

It is uncertain to what particular incidents of scapegrace mischief the above couplet refers; but obviously the two plurals, "pupils" and "bears," are plurals of generality merely; and one sees that the bard himself in boxing-gloves, and his shaggy *protégé* in native fur, or perhaps made grotesque in cap and gown —a formidable "cub" (as pupils were termed) for a nervous tutor—are alone intended. Did the bear paw-mark the sacred gravel of the Great Court? Was he imported into Mr. Tavell's staircase in a sedan-chair? Did he in an unguarded moment usurp a seat in the porter's lodge? These are questions that cannot now be answered. But my old friend distinctly remembered the personality of the animal, kept at livery in the stable-yard of an inn, which, probably rebuilt and enlarged, was still standing when I first knew Cambridge nearly forty years ago, and was, I think, "The Castle and Falcon," or known by some similar title. Probably it may since then have followed off the road the stage-coach teams which it once sheltered; in one of which coaches, as Academic youth believed (but Academic youth believe easily), that journey was performed, in which two travellers,

* 'Hints from Horace,' where a note records the position of the Rev. G. T. Tavell as contemporary Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge.

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booked as "Lord Byron and Mr. Bruin," occupied *vis-à-vis* corner seats from London to Cambridge—in fact the bear aforesaid and the noble bear-leader; the former being brought up by the latter ostensibly "to sit for a fellowship." My old friend had several times seen the bear (to whom landlord, ostler and helps all acted as *valets de chambre*), on chain indeed, but unmuzzled, gambolling in the inn yard, and rolling sometimes into and out of the big tub which served him for a cubicle. The eccentric owner would take him out to witness a cock-fight, or a time-gallop over Newmarket turf, in whatever vehicle most delighted the jaunty gownsmen of that early day before "dog-carts" were yet popularized. "Love me, love my *bear*," would be a difficult application of a well-known proverb, and one requiring a higher than average standard of "altruism." The friend of the late Frank Buckland, more than thirty years later in the century, found it so when regaled or alarmed by the antics of his similar ursine favourite, "Tiglath-Pileser." It is probable, however, that what Macaulay says of the Puritan aversion to bear-baiting as a popular sport—"not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the people"—would apply inversely to Byron's predilection in this instance, as founded—unlike Buckland's—not on gratification which he derived from zoology so much as from embarrassment which he hoped thereby to cause to Academic authorities, by perplexing them with a new form of unruliness.

And yet Byron was not without a genuine enthusiasm for animal life. "Have a care, or that monkey will fly at you!" was his caution to Moore, when visiting him much later in Italy, as he showed his future biographer to the door. One may also remember his engaging in a roadside quarrel in the same region "with a fellow who was impudent to my horse"; and his love for dogs culminates in his well-known epitaph on "Boatswain," which, commenting on the word "friend" as applied in human experience, concludes with—

> "I never knew *but one*—and here he lies;"

the exaggerated misanthropy of which arose probably from some pique—or mere desire to add piquancy—at the moment. On his dog-friends (or one of them), however, I shall have something to add further on. To return for the moment to his Cantab period. He records a pool at a mill-dam above Cambridge, where he used to dive, and cling at the bottom round the stump of one of the

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posts, and "wonder how the —— I got there." This quaint expression of wonder illustrates happily the groping sense of novel surroundings which the youthful diver experiences at a much less depth than "full fathom five." "Something new and strange," as Ariel sings, takes possession of one for the nonce, while the necessity of holding one's breath, involving the non-aëration of the blood, reacts on the brain, and imparts a dreaminess to the whole experience, which makes it seem expedient to fish something up, if it be but a pebble or sherd, to give evidence when the time comes to breathe again, *superasque evadere ad auras.* During the same maiden visit to Cambridge above referred to, I explored that pool, known then and probably now by the tradition of his name. It seemed to me, I remember, of depth hardly answering to the Byronic record, and insignificant as compared with other fresh water with which I was then familiar in Somersetshire. My own experience is that nothing is so often exaggerated as depth of water. But perhaps it may have got silted up partly in the interval of forty odd years. At any rate, the mill-post was gone. It was probably in Byron's time a solitary survivor, and in its unsupported individuality would easily be washed out even by such sluggish waters as those of the Cam.

Byron's athletic preferences were established in favour of boxing and swimming, chiefly by the unfortunate infirmity of his feet. Amateur rowing was at this period yet in the future, or his natural outlet would have been the College eight-oar, and much good its discipline would probably have done him; while his well-formed arms and shoulders would have certainly made him a very efficient oarsman, the malformation referred to not being such as to impede the use of the stretcher. As it was, he had nothing but the native muscle to rely on, and therefore boxed and swam. But later at Venice we hear of his sculling in the lagoon daily to the Armenian Convent, with a preference for days of wilder weather, as if derived from his grandfather the Admiral, known in the navy as "Foul-weather Jack."

Again, at a later period, nearly twenty years ago, it was my lot to make in a foreign capital the acquaintance of the probably last survivor of the circle who remembered Byron; one indeed belonging to a family, some of whose members had intimate relations with him. He had been at Harrow as a junior boy when Byron was still there as a senior; was indeed, I think, his fag, at any rate remembered him as sharing the "monitorial" authority which is mostly committed to upper boys. I gathered

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from him that Byron, as a "monitor" (if that is the correct Harrovian designation), was not only far from being a pillar of discipline, but equally remote from a wholesome personal example. His attitude towards authority, I gathered, was that of an impatient chafing on the curb, tempered by a reserve of personal loyalty to the Headmaster; but for which, he would, as a monitor, have been a traitor in the camp of discipline. The Irishman's defiant question, "Have ye got a government? Then I'm *agin* it," illustrates Byron's attitude of ingrained contumacy against all authority. Sallies of flightiness and fits of moodiness showed, even then, such oscillations of character as mark the lack of steadying ballast; and he illustrated that maxim of his own which made his life a moral zig-zag, pronouncing that

> ". . . Surely they're sincerest,
> Who 're strongly acted on by what is nearest."

Thus he was like a gun on a hair-trigger, quick to detonate, and shooting true to its line of inclination at the moment, but without aim, and which might hit vacuity, or bring down a bird, or maim a friend.

My informant, who had further occasions of noting Byron's plunge into fame—shooting to Parnassian heights as suddenly and easily as to the bottom of his favourite pool in the Cam—laid most stress on the dangerous stimulus which it gave to this gustiness of nature. It besotted him, especially with the fumes of female adulation; and you might see a shoal of high-bred beauties for a few seasons elbowing each other at Lady Melbourne's or Lady Jersey's receptions, for a place within earshot of his finely modulated tones. It seems to me that his sketch of Juan's *personnel** reflects a somewhat idealized self, and that, especially in the lines,

> "The Devil hath not, in all his quiver's choice,
> An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice,"

the poet is not unconscious of his own triumphs in that kind. The student of his poems will, I think, if he attends to the point, conclude that this fine natural organ had but little ear to guide it, and that music proper was to Byron not indeed wholly a blank, but a medium to which he was largely neutral. Moore records evenings at Mr. D. Kinnaird's in 1814, "where music—followed by its accustomed sequel of supper, &c.—kept us

* Don Juan, xv. st. 12 foll.; see also 82–4.

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together usually till rather a late hour. Besides," he says, "those songs of mine which he has himself somewhere recorded as his favourites, there was also one to a Portuguese air . . . which seemed especially to please him;—the national character of the music, and the recurrence of the words 'Sunny Mountains,' bringing back freshly to his memory the impressions of all he had seen in Portugal. I have indeed known few persons more alive to the charms of simple music; and have not unfrequently seen tears in his eyes while listening to the Irish melodies." Thus Moore piles up facts which go to disprove his theory. For is it not plain that the words, reminiscences and sentiments were what drew the tears of Byron, and that the music was at best but a secondary vehicle? Thus, "I loathe an opera more than Dennis did,"* is probably a genuine confession; and indeed at an opera in Venice to which Byron took Moore, the former's share in the evening's amusement lay, so far as recorded, in scraps of gossip about celebrities or notorieties, alike before and behind the curtain, retailed apparently while the music was proceeding. Medora's guitar and Lady Adeline's harp are of course mere stage-properties. On the contrary, in his vein of quizzical humour, nothing comes more really to hand for a butt or foil of his satire than music, musicians, singers and critics of the art. Thus,

> "Orpheus, we know from Ovid and Lemprière,
> Led all wild beasts but women by the ear,"†

and all will remember the Count in "Beppo." There is a passage which looks like an exception in the "Hebrew Melody" beginning, "The harp the monarch-minstrel swept;" but on examination it turns out to be a mere expansion, with poetic licence, of a passage in Burnet's 'History of Music.'‡ How different this from the melodious sensitiveness of his crony and fellow-minstrel Moore! In short, into the spells of solemn pathos which the genius of Byron casts upon us music hardly enters. The greatest master of emotional poetry for three centuries, he but slenderly recognizes this most copious and natural of all the stimulants of emotion. The extent to which this negative characteristic has been skipped by his biographers and critics has led me thus far to diverge upon the subject from the theme to which I return.

* 'Hints from Horace.' † Ibid.
‡ See the passage quoted in the notes to Murray's fullest edition.

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In illustration of the persistency with which Byron was dogged by female devotees and dosed with feminine flattery, my friend recounted how two fair pilgrims found their way once to Newstead in his absence. With that intrepid curiosity which ladies evince on such adventures of interest, and with that love of relic-hunting which seems the proper *pendant* to such curiosity, they examined his personal quarters, handled his boxing-gloves and foils, but found nothing which they could with decency appropriate, until a rough-coated dog, a successor to the buried and lamented "Boatswain," entered the room. The dog could tell no tales; the servant, duly bribed, might be relied on to tell none. So in despair of a token from the poet's own at that time luxuriant curls, they took a vicarious sample from the animal; and, submitting him to the shears, bore away each her trophy, remarking that "Byron may have patted his favourite on the very spot, you know, where those hairs grew." Possibly the servant blabbed, later and long after, of this canine "Rape of the Lock." More probably the ladies—just as there are sorrows too great for utterance—found their triumph too great for silence, and boasted of their spoil to admiring friends.

Of the enormous mischief done to Byron's character by this sickly-sentimental atmosphere of adulation my friend entertained a profound impression, and was disposed to ascribe more lasting ill-effects to it, through that feminine element in Byron's own character which led his friend Lord Broughton to extenuate his vagaries as those of "a favourite and sometimes froward sister." Byron's conduct to a woman seemed governed (excepting always his own sister) with some degree of reverence for principle.

And the same cause, female adulation, which would have unsteadied most men at his age, and for the greater part of his career unhinged the moral balance, provoked still further the wild caprices of his nature, as though to show his votaries that their idol could match them at their wildest flight. Flashes as from a female soul, brilliant, excitable and impetuous, form for page after page of his letters and diaristic fragments, the staple of his self-delineation.

You might find in them all the traits of a coquette; sometimes pert, vain, touchy and flippant, sometimes defiant, irascible and vindictive. There lie on the surface these distinctly feminine attributes, as in his talk there lurked all the apparatus of luring smiles and ensnaring tones, the plausible innuendo, the dexterous *équivoque*, the audacious topsy-turveying of morality, the saucy snap-shot taken at another's folly, in order to escape, as it were,

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from his own in the smoke. And while parading his volatility, he united it to a masculine intensity and a virile hardihood of self-will, which makes him seem the hermaphrodite of genius. Like most women, it was more easy for him to be generous than just. Truth would be distorted or inverted to bolster up some view snatched up from the inconstancy of the moment; and facts be forgotten or discoloured as pique or passion swayed. Moore, who keeps all the brightest hues of the biographer's palette for him, declares that he never could keep a secret, and that none who valued confidential dealing would ever place one in his keeping. His very courage seems at least as much feminine as masculine, was reinforced or paralysed by nervous excitement, and would "come and go," like a lady's complexion. In short the "treble-clef" contains the dominant note of his character, although with a swelling under-tone of bass. My friend's opinion might have condensed itself in two quotations, *varium et mutabile semper*, and *capricieuse comme une jolie femme*. Byron had indeed caught this from his mother, as naturally as most daughters might. She was, it seems, shallow and gusty, while he rolls "a bay of breakers"; and to him might have been used by a friend Brutus's apology to Cassius:

> "When you are over hasty with your Brutus,
> He'll think *your mother* chides, and leave you so."

Probably no man has ever suffered more from unhappy domestic antecedents. The son of a mother with whom he shared a temperament which made them mutually insupportable to each other, the son of a father whose early death was the best boon he could have conferred on his infant heir, Byron had no kin on either side to fill the void which nature abhors, and which an especially emotional nature like his craves to have filled. While from earlier ancestry a tangle of embarrassment was demised to him, and his noble guardian showed him the cold shoulder of distasteful superciliousness, he had "a heart which, though faulty, was feeling," and sensitively susceptible of all the mischief of which this array of mischances could produce. With manifold charms of person, voice, and manner, and with features which flashed a mobile mirror of emotion and intellect, he was dashed and marred by one malformation, which, while it mortified vanity, undermined physical health. Too conscious of his besetting corpulent tendencies—these again being due to a maternal source—he would persecute his constitution, and exacerbate the pun-

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gency of his caprices, by extreme dietary treatment, by fits of self-starvation and unwholesome counter-agents to the dreaded obesity. By means of tobacco-chewing, green-tea drinking, breaking a long fast on biscuits and soda-water, by an outbreak on potatoes, fish—*stale* fish, one biographer states,—and vinegar, he carried on an unnatural self-coercion, a struggle between vanity and *avoirdupois*. The loss of a stone of flesh-weight gladdened him more than all the sold copies of the "Corsair." It was Adonis—but Adonis *boiteux*—pitted against Sir John Falstaff, in the same capricious personality; and even if he for a while conquered the "flesh" he retained the "frailties." The consequences were stomach in rebellion, liver stagnating, and temper ever at full-cock of rebellious versatility, while his minor habits were to the last degree vagrant and non-domestic. What a subject for matrimony—this risky mass of conflicting eccentricities!

I have said you might compile a coquette complete from those curly shavings which his character throws off in letters and diary. But there was after all something solid and noble below. He died at six-and-thirty, just as he seemed to have shed off the shavings, and to be showing a firmer plank and closer grain of character, something better than a great genius spoilt. And indeed it is equally possible to compile an opposite portrait out of his literary remains; one exhibiting depth of affection, romantic sympathy with all that is grandest in nature, generosity in aiding the weak and distressed, a profound and melancholy sense of the vanity of human life, together with spasmodic flashes of a deep religious sentiment. But apart from the interest of these two opposite sides of the human medal there came the romantic shock which arrested public judgment upon his character, by early death in an unselfish cause. Just as he seemed to have at last cast anchor in a motive which might concentrate energy, subdue emotion to effort, the imaginative to the practical, and correct eccentricity by self-devotion, the cable snapped and he drifted away into the dark. Somewhat like a knight-errant, with foot in stirrup and hand on lance, whom the trumpet-call has roused from dalliance and illicit orgies at last; on the very eve of an enterprise, the heroism of which might have redeemed the egotism of a life misspent, Lord Byron passed away. Awhile the idol, and anon the outcast, of the highest social circle in England, he closed the blotted record of what was hardly more than youth, at the moment when a leaf seemed turning which promised to efface the older pages. Therefore to do him justice

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is most difficult. If his ill-deserts were great, his final promise was greater. Contemporary censure, the full severity of which he had certainly provoked, became suddenly the verdict of posterity. That verdict somewhat reflects the bias of his own nature—is generous rather than just; or rather, perhaps, generosity *is* justice towards such a brief, erratic and brilliant paradox of life. Criticism turns to sympathy, and those who thought harshly become those who feel tenderly. The world which had for some years regarded him as a scamp shaken off, felt suddenly the pang of bereavement for a lost genius. It reviled an egotist, it mourned a hero.

But is there no "fly in the ointment" of heroism at this last departure of Childe Harold upon Hellenic pilgrimage? Yes, there was another side to it, or something else *in*side. If he warmly embraced a cause, he coldly deserted a woman, who for his sake had eaten the bitter bread of domestic dishonour. Was he stirred by compunction for the outrage and the shame? or was he merely throwing away this latest feminine toy as he had thrown away so many before? It seems impossible now to pronounce. There are, as we shall further see, glimpses of a changed and bettered mind in his last year. Drawn to a large enterprise of unselfishness, he may have reflected: "to prosecute it, continuing this tie, degrading in itself, is impossible." But it had the evil air of forsaking one who had staked her all and lost her best on him and for him. Such is the Nemesis of lawless passion. Penitence, even if sincere, can scarce ever seem disinterested. The impression left on competent witnesses was that he wearied of La Guiccioli and deserted her. She was not likely to submit without remonstrance, and he replied by putting the Ionian Sea between them. Thus our knight-errant, with whatever genuine zeal against giant and dragon, rides with a bend sinister on his shield and makes a convenience of his own enthusiasm. No doubt he longs to set Hellas free, but he longs equally to be free himself, and so, in the words of an old song, "he loves and he rides away."

That there was some marked change in the attitude of Byron's mind on moral and religious subjects in the last few months of his life, rests primarily on the evidence of his servant Fletcher, who is not rated highly in point of intelligence. But the fact, if fact it were, would not need a high order of intelligence to note it; and an astute servant of such a master would be more likely to distrust and discredit it than one stupidly honest and warmly

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attached. The only question is whether Fletcher would be likely to invent it for the consolation of Mrs. Leigh, Lord Byron's sister,* who certainly accepted it and derived solace from it. But here it should be added, that she, writing to the Rev. F. Hodgson, the warm and attached friend of them both, says—

"You see, dear Mr. H., that Mr. Hobhouse and a certain set imagine that it might be said by his enemies, and those who have no religion at all, that he [Byron] had turned Methodist, if it was said that he paid latterly more attention to his religious duties than formerly. But let them say what they will, it must be the first of consolations to us that he did so. I am convinced of it from Fletcher's assertions, and a letter from a Dr. Kennedy in Cephalonia to Fletcher since the death. I shall ever bless that man for his endeavours to work upon his mind."†

It thus appears that Mrs. Leigh had seen a letter of "a Dr. Kennedy" to Fletcher which gave her confirmatory evidence of the fact on which she dwells. It is thus no mere surmise snatched from below stairs to comfort bereavement above. This Dr. Kennedy is a well-known person, and occurs in 'Moore's Life' (vi. pp. 86, foll.) as holding with Byron at Cephalonia, within the last six months of the latter's earthly career, some "curious conversations, now published." They confirm the view that the religious framework of Byron's mind, long a thing of broken outlines and shifting shadows, was now shaping itself with something like definiteness, that Faith was feeling for the helm of conscience. Moore represents Dr. Kennedy as an earnest believer, who sought to establish others in the great charter of faith and love, by which, although perhaps narrowly interpreting some of its clauses, he had himself been enfranchised. That Byron and he held high converse on much that lies in the Bible between God and man, not once but often, and not through the change-loving caprice of a satiated sceptic, but of set purpose, seems incontestable. That Byron expressly disclaimed infidel tenets and denial of the Scriptures or deliberate maintenance of a disbelieving attitude, is expressly affirmed by Dr. Kennedy. On Byron's side a remarkable practical confirmation is to be gathered from a letter of his

* See an essay on the "Byron Ladies" by the present writer, republished lately from the *National Review* in "'Why we Suffer' and Other Essays" (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1889).

† The passage is from the last of a series of letters, or extracts, twenty-four in number, published by Mr. J. C. Jeaffreson in the *Athenæum* of September 19, 1885. It is dated July 29, 1824, and had previously appeared in the 'Memoir of the Rev. F. Hodgson,' vol. ii. p. 149.

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to the Doctor within a few weeks of his death, where he says: "Besides the tracts, &c., which you have sent for distribution, one of the English artificers (hight Brownbill, a tinman) left to my charge a number of Greek Testaments, which I will endeavour to distribute properly. . . . I am trying to reconcile the clergy to their distribution." Here we have the reputed infidel and undoubted whilom libertine engaged, on his own showing, in work resembling that of the S. P. C. K., or the Bible Society; and that not only for Dr. Kennedy, whom he had reasons to respect, but for Brownbill, "artificer" and "tinman," of whom in the same letter he goes on to speak in somewhat disparaging terms, and mildly quizzes for running away from an unreal danger.* It could then have been on no personal grounds, such as often led Byron to do startling things, that he accepted this mission-work, as we should now call it, from the tinman. And the only alternative is that it must have sprung from *respect for the work itself.* He was further, we may infer, even risking some offence for the sake of it, to the national clergy, whom, circumstanced as he then was, it was his obvious policy to conciliate. We realize in this fact his own saying, "Truth is stranger than fiction," and the proverb comes to us stamped with the example of its author. It seems to confirm some process, however imperfect as yet, of an inward change. Dr. Kennedy was probably the first layman he had met whose earnest life expressed the truth within him. That expression had its natural effect, and the *blasé* poet-rake, who would have been sparing of any professions for fear of having them contrasted with his life, takes yet to action, and distributes not only dollars and cartridges, the sinews of war and the munitions thereof, but tracts and Greek Testaments. How easy it would have been for him to plead his position and responsibilities, and his necessity of keeping the *entente cordiale* intact with that most potent of national elements the Greek clergy, and to have pitched the tracts, etc., into the Suliotes' camp-fire! Kennedy had appealed to the nobler self within him—author as he was of "Cain," "The Vision of Judgment" and "Don Juan"—and the inference suggested surely is that it was not irresponsive, and that "Augusta" was entitled to her crumb of comfort. I think that due weight has not been given to these facts by biographers, and that an immortal memory claims to have them placed without exaggeration in the scale.

* Vol. vi. p. 172–3.

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One cannot help some touch of amused indignation at the qualms of "Mr. Hobhouse and a certain set," which somewhat suggest the sympathies of the mob at the gallows for the malefactor who "dies game," that is, brazens out impenitent infamy with hardihood to the last. It is, however, chiefly worth noting that Mr. Hobhouse is *not* cited as *doubting* the fact, only as wishing the mention of it suppressed in the interest, as he conceived, of his late friend's character—a wish and a view which pertinently illustrate the moral standards of good society in 1824.

And after all, there seems no antecedent presumption against the truth of it. Devotion to a noble cause wakes up all that is noblest in man, often to assert itself with more power from a long period of suppression. Byron at intervals all along, unless in that two years' carnival that he kept at Venice, shows glimpses by fits—everything in him is fitful—of that nobler self to which Dr. Kennedy appealed.

How startling to come across in his "Epic-satire" of Libertinism unchained, the following passage!—

> "Persecuted sages teach the schools
> Their folly in forgetting there are fools.
> Was it not so, great Locke? and greater Bacon?
> Great Socrates? and Thou, Diviner still,
> Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,
> And Thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?
> Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken."

Where at the words "Diviner still," the poet adds a note: "As it is necessary in these times to avoid ambiguity, I say that I mean by 'Diviner still,' CHRIST. If ever God was man, or man God, He was *both*." A man who can thus feel and admire even by fits and snatches a great Ideal, has not lost the susceptibility of faith, however widely his life may have recoiled from the practice of its principles.

In the last chapter of his career no woman appears in contact with him, save the mere girl *protégées*, of whom anon. His is the part of Achilles with that of Briseis omitted. I am indebted here for the following touching anecdote to Mr. E. D. Barff, son of the senior partner in the firm of Messrs. Barff and Hancock, bankers, of Zante, well known from the many letters of Byron to him in the last volume of Moore's Life. Mr. Barff, junior, has also enabled me now to publish the probably actual last letter, undoubtedly the latest extant, of the poet, his father's sometime client.

Among some Turkish prisoners whom the Greeks, unable to

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deny Lord Byron anything, had placed at his disposal, was a Turkish maiden of thirteen or thereabouts. She was the daughter of a Pasha, or some Turk of rank and influence, and had been placed by Byron in the family of Mr. Barff, in Zante, and under his protection. The Turks discovered her retreat, and sent a frigate shortly after Byron's death, to request her friendly surrender. Mr. Barff was sorely puzzled how to act; regarding Byron's request as a trust imposed upon him, and knowing that the latter's wish had been to provide for her in England through his sister's care. He at last referred the matter to the girl's own decision, who evinced the greatest distress at the news of her benefactor's death, and said, bursting into tears, "If he had been alive, I would have gone with him and his anywhere. But he is dead, and his friends know nothing of me. I will go back to my father;" and returned accordingly. The winning confidence with which Byron at this period inspired all who approached him cannot be more effectively illustrated than by this willingness of the Turkish girl to become in effect an orphan and an exile through her absolute trust in his sincerity—a step so revolting to all the traditional prejudices, especially in 1824, of the Moslem against the "Giaour."

Another somewhat similar case, for, on comparing the notices it seems impossible to be the same, is mentioned by Byron in his February letters to Mr. Mayer and Mr. Murray, and in that of March 4th to Dr. Kennedy (pp. 162, 168, 173), but *not* in any to Mr. Barff. The Turkish girl, therein named "Hatô or Hatagée," is a child of *nine* years, who has a mother, then a refugee with Mr. Millingen (a name which occurs often in the record of Byron's last days); but this girl is herself, at the time, under the care of Dr. Kennedy and his wife. Mother and child are the last remnants of a family ruined in the revolutionary war, and without natural protectors; for Byron expressly says, all the child's brothers had been killed.

One may conclude that both cases are instances of Byron's constant efforts to mitigate the horrors of war—especially those worst horrors of sensual savagery, perpetrated when the fighting is over,* between combatants, ferocious through servitude on one side, and barbarism on the other, and retaliation on both.

The letter above referred to, addressed to Mr. Barff, is as

* "I am uneasy at being here," wrote Byron to Colonel Stanhope, when in a position of some peril, "not so much on my own account as on that of a Greek boy with me, for you know what his fate would be; and I would sooner cut him in pieces and myself too, than have him taken out by those barbarians."

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follows. It has only the special interest of its being the last, or the last known, unless it be in the evidence which it gives of the poet's persevering attempts to master the forms of commercial success.

April 9, 1824.

DEAR SIR,—The above is a copy of a letter from Messrs. Ransom received this morning. I have also to acknowledge yours and one from Mr. Barry of Genoa (partner of Messrs. Webb and Co. of Genoa and Leghorn), who had forwarded the same to you for my address. I agree with you in opinion, and shall continue to draw directly on England as the safest (and perhaps least expensive method) instead of having dollars up from Genoa or Leghorn. This will be the preferable course so long as the exchange is fair in the Islands. Will you instruct me how to regulate myself about the firsts and seconds, &c., of Exchange, as indicated in the second paragraph of the letter copied, as I am not very accurate or intelligent in technical matters of business of this sort, and wish to be quite correct? Have you any further news of the Greek Loan? Is it really settled, and how? For my advices are not recent enough to treat of this fully; some say one thing and some another here. Bowring's letter to me is sanguine, but others are less decisive, though not discouraging to the Greeks. I hope that you have received various letters of mine, as you do not state having received any since the 30th, I mention this accordingly. Lega will state the various dates of the expedition of letters.

The letter of credit [is] for £4 instead of £3000 sterling (as mentioned in your letter of this morning, perhaps by mistake); but the number is of no material difference (as you are sufficiently aware) when I draw direct on my London correspondents.

Ever and truly yours,

N. B.

On the very day on which the above was written, if Moore's record (vi. p. 200) is exact, the writer took the fatal ride from which he returned wet through in an open boat, was seized later with a shuddering, and felt fever and rheumatic pains. On the next he transacted business, and rode out again, but "it was the last time he ever crossed the threshold alive." On the 15th of April he received several letters, but there is no mention of his writing any. Then came the flickering out of life's candle, amid bleeding, blistering, and delirium, and on the 19th the end.

The present Mr. Barff has preserved a portrait-album of Philhellenic celebrities in 1823-4, including one of Byron himself, probably as "Archestrategos," in a dragoon helmet and chin-strap, but with the invariable lay-down collar and open neck which his other portraits show.

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It is a fair inference from the above facts that the Byron of 1824 was morally brightening and steadying out of the baleful-meteor form into what might have been a wholesome luminary. The last few months of his earthly career form a tolerably consistent whole; and in contrast with its previous years show a tenour of life lived with a purpose. An unexpected patience, an absence of irritability, a long-suffering concern for others, pains taken for objects which before he cared not for—all these rise suddenly on the surface of a nature hitherto mercurial and egotistic. Full of self-willed false steps as that previous course had been, the most fatal error of all was probably his marriage, not merely in the choice which he actually made, but in choosing at all a state for which at that time he was signally lacking in aptitudes; not to mention his then accumulating financial embarrassment, his own irritability under which made the matrimonial experiment one of terrible risk. Failing to make him, matrimony marred him; and the error found its *Nemesis* in the episodes of his successive *liaisons*, astonishing Europe and disgusting England. Then follows a change at once of scene, comrades, influences, employments and character. A noble vein of self-sacrifice opens, a sense of responsibility awakens. The man, so cynical and frivolous, becomes careful for others, circumspect, trustworthy and lovable—not by fits, which somehow he was all along—but continuously. The caprice of the moment is no more the determining factor of the nature. He feels his new position one of influence, and exerts it for unmixed good. We have seen in these few months how he picked up two Turkish *protégées*, maidens; and, had he lived to leaven the War of Independence with the instincts of humanity, Mrs. Leigh would perhaps have found these forlorn waifs, Turk and Greek alike, inconveniently numerous.

He finds business details necessary, and, as shown above in his last letter, does his best to master the technicalities of exchange. He is generous in great things, and industrious in small. It is as though his life's current had escaped from the rapids and cataracts which broke it into cross-purposes before, and flowed now with solemn union of volume under one motive, outside self. Just as that unification is realized, it dashes into the dark chasm and is lost. How much of promise, of repentance and reparation, was lost with it, can never be known, until the day when all secrets shall be open.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH.

MICHAEL FARADAY.—NOTES FROM PARIS.—M. GRÉVY.

MICHAEL FARADAY.

ON September 22, 1791, Michael Faraday was born at Newington Butts. One hundred years have therefore passed away since this greatest of experimental philosophers first saw the light. The centenary of his birth has been appropriately celebrated by two lectures in the theatre of the Royal Institution, by Lord Rayleigh and Professor Dewar respectively, in which these distinguished scientists summed up the marvellous and beneficent results which have accrued to the world from Faraday's discoveries. It may not be out of place to mark the occasion by laying before our readers a brief summary of the life and work of this "prince of modern investigators."

The story of his life is full of interest, and of that kind of interest which appeals especially to Englishmen. His father was a blacksmith, and so far as Michael could remember a man of no unusual abilities. Having a family of ten children, he was naturally unable to give them a liberal education. "My education," says Faraday, "was of the most ordinary description, consisting of little more than the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic at a common day-school." At the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to one Riebau, a stationer and bookbinder, of No. 2, Blandford Street, where he was at first employed as an errand-boy. In after years he never forgot this early occupation, and always evinced a kindly interest in newspaper boys. "I always feel a tenderness for those boys," he once said to his niece, "because I once carried newspapers myself." He was afterwards engaged as a bookbinder, and duly served his apprenticeship. Some thirty years later, when Faraday had achieved a European reputation, he one evening took Professor Tyndall by the arm, as they were leaving the Royal Institution, and said, "Come, Tyndall, I will show you something that will interest you." They walked northwards, and at length reached Blandford Street, when, after a little looking about, he paused before a stationer's shop, and then went in. "On entering the shop," says the Professor, "his usual animation seemed doubled; he looked rapidly at everything it contained. To the left on entering was a door, through which he looked down into a little room, with a window in front facing Blandford Street. Drawing me towards him, he said eagerly, 'Look

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there, Tyndall, that was my working place. I bound books in that little nook.'" But though engaged in binding books, his tastes and longings were elsewhere. Trade he hated, while science he loved. He eagerly devoured the scientific works which came under his notice in the pursuit of his calling. "At the age of thirteen," he writes to M. De la Rive, "I entered the shop of a bookseller and bookbinder, remained there eight years, and during the chief part of the time, bound books. Now it was in these books, in the hours after work, that I found the beginning of my philosophy. There were two that especially helped me, the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' from which I gained my first notions of electricity, and Mrs. Marcet's 'Conversations on Chemistry,' which gave me my foundations in that science."

At length there came to Faraday that tide in the affairs of man which taken in the flood leads on to fortune. A customer of the shop gave to the young bookbinder a ticket for the last four lectures of Sir Humphry Davy at the Royal Institution. Faraday went, took full notes of the lectures, wrote them fairly out with illustrations of his own, and then sent them to the great chemist, with the earnest entreaty that some opening might be found for him in the service of science. Davy was struck with the ability displayed in the notes, and wrote kindly to the young man, with promises of assistance; and in the following March Faraday found himself appointed to the post of chemical assistant in the Laboratory of the Royal Institution, at a salary of 25*s.* a week. He was now twenty-two years of age, and the desire of his heart was fulfilled. Henceforth his life may be described, with hardly any exaggeration, as one long series of scientific discoveries. For a long time he travelled on the Continent in the capacity of assistant to Sir H. Davy, and on his return resumed his post at the Royal Institution. In 1816 he published his first article in 'The Quarterly Journal of Science'; and a few years later a chemical paper of his was read before the Royal Society, and afterwards honoured with a place in the "Philosophical Transactions." In 1821, at the age of thirty, he married, and brought his young wife to his rooms at the Royal Institution, which they continued to occupy for a period of forty-six years. The marriage was an eminently happy one, as this entry, written in Faraday's own hand in his book of diplomas, many years afterwards, bears witness to:—

"Among these records and events, I here insert the date of one which, as a source of honour and happiness, far exceeds all the rest. We were *married* on June 12, 1821.

"M. FARADAY."

It would be impossible, in the small space at our disposal, to follow in detail the successive steps of Faraday's remarkable discoveries While assisting Davy in the laboratory, he undertook independent investigations for himself, which resulted, among other things, in the discovery of the compound now known as benzine, out of which, we

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are told, he could quite easily have made his fortune. Five years later, at the age of forty, he made his first discoveries in electricity, which placed him at once among the leading scientific men of Europe.

After ten years of incessant labour, marked by the most brilliant successes, his health completely broke down. Giddiness, accompanied by loss of memory, compelled him for a time to suspend all scientific investigations. He travelled for a few months in Switzerland, delighting in the beautiful scenery, and amusing himself with the botany of the country. The journal which he then kept, and in which he fastened his botanical specimens, is full of genuine interest. Like Martin Luther, he was not ashamed of his humble origin. He is at Interlaken, enjoying the glory of the Jungfrau sunsets, and at times watching the nail-makers at their work. And he writes :—"Clout nail-making goes on here rather considerably, and is a very neat and pretty occupation to observe. I love a smith's shop and anything relating to smithery. *My father was a smith.*" For nearly four years Faraday was more or less incapacitated from serious work; after which period he regained his former health and vigour. He was now fifty-four, and some twenty years of life yet remained to him, in which to pursue his investigations. Those years were sacredly devoted to the cause he loved, and further discoveries, which added, if possible, fresh lustre to his name, resulted from his untiring experiments. He died, at the age of seventy-six, sitting in his study-chair, at Hampton Court, on August 25, 1867, and was buried at Highgate Cemetery, where a simple stone marks his resting-place.

In estimating the character of Michael Faraday, "the greatest experimental philosopher the world has ever seen," his deep religious earnestness must ever occupy a prominent position. He belonged, like his parents, to the curious sect of the Sandemanian Baptists, and for a short period held the office of an elder in that community. It was then his custom to occupy the pulpit on alternate Sundays, but his preaching does not seem to have been remarkable. His object, we are told, seemed to be to make the most use of the words of Scripture, and as little as possible of his own. To a lady, who wished to become one of his disciples, he wrote, "There is no philosophy in my religion. I am of a very small and despised sect of Christians, known, if known at all, as Sandemanians, and our hope is founded on the faith that is in Christ. But though the natural works of God can never by any possibility come in contradiction with the higher things that belong to our future existence, still I do not think it at all necessary to mix the study of the natural sciences and religion together, and in my intercourse with my fellow-creatures that which is religious and that which is philosophical have ever been two distinct things." Though a firm believer in the Christian revelation, as his letters and journals abundantly show, he never obtruded his opinions upon others. "Never once," says Professor Tyndall, "during an intimacy of fifteen years, did he mention religion to me, save when I drew him on the subject. He then spoke to me

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without hesitation or reluctance; not with any apparent desire to 'improve the occasion,' but to give me such information as I sought. He believed the human heart to be swayed by a power to which science or logic opened no approach, and, right or wrong, this faith, held in perfect tolerance of the faiths of others, strengthened and beautified his life."

His mediocrity as a preacher is the more remarkable when we bear in mind his unparalleled pre-eminence as a lecturer. He possessed the rare gift of speaking the deepest things most simply. For thirty-eight years his lectures were the life of the Royal Institution. His charming manners, his lucid language, his admirable illustrations, at once arrested the attention of even the youngest among his hearers. "Among all lecturers heard by me," wrote the late Sir Frederick Pollock, "he was easily the first. Airy, Sedgwick, Owen, Tyndall, and Huxley belong to the highest order, but there was a peculiar charm and fascination about Faraday which placed him on an elevation too high for comparison with others."

Another prominent feature in Faraday's character was his absolute love of science for its own sake. He freely gave his discoveries to his world, when he could easily have built up a colossal fortune upon them. He once told his friend Professor Tyndall, that at a certain period of his career he had definitely to ask himself whether he should make wealth or science the object of his life. He could not serve both masters, and was therefore compelled to choose between them. When preparing his well-known memoir of the great master, the Professor called to mind this conversation, and asked leave to examine his accounts. And this is the conclusion the Professor arrived at. "Taking the duration of his life into account, this son of a blacksmith, and apprentice to a bookbinder, had to decide between a fortune of £150,000, on the one side, and his unendowed science on the other. He chose the latter, and died a poor man. But his was the glory of holding aloft among the nations the scientific name of England for a period of forty years." It would be out of place to enter at any length upon the nature of Faraday's discoveries. Suffice it to say that to his patient investigation, and inspired insight into nature, we owe, among other advantages, the whole system of the Electric Telegraph, the use of electricity for medical purposes, the telephone, and the electric light.

In summing up this short notice, we cannot do better than once more quote the words of Professor Tyndall. "As Faraday recedes from me in time," he wrote on the occasion of the Centenary Lecture last June, "his character becomes to my mind more and more beautiful." "Surely," he says elsewhere, "no memory could be more beautiful. He was equally rich in mind and heart. The fairest traits of a character sketched by Paul, found in him perfect illustration. For he was 'blameless, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, not given to filthy lucre.' A favourite experiment of his own was representative of

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himself. He loved to show that water in crystallizing excluded all foreign ingredients, however intimately they might be mixed with it. Out of acids, alkalies, or saline solutions, the crystal comes sweet and pure. By some such natural process in the formation of this man beauty and nobleness coalesced, to the exclusion of everything vulgar and low. He did not learn his gentleness in the world, for he withdrew himself from its culture; and still this land of England contained no truer gentleman than he. Not half his greatness was incorporate in his science, for science could not reveal the bravery and delicacy of his heart."

JOHN VAUGHAN.

NOTES FROM PARIS.

Who could have foreseen some time ago that *la perfide Albion* would become popular in France, and have a share in the enthusiasm hitherto lavished exclusively on Russia, and all things Russian? And yet, a single act of courtesy from the Queen of England has sufficed to perform the seeming miracle. The French are grateful for any kindness, and, as one of Dickens's heroes discovered, "so sentimental" that they feel keenly, with instinctive delicacy, the slightest act of friendliness. And that the revered English Sovereign should have reviewed their fleet in person, and have shown such graceful kindness to their officers—that the English nation should also have shown such heartiness in their hospitality, especially so much more heartiness than in their preceding greetings to the German Emperor—is overpoweringly delightful, and most unexpectedly gratifying to the national pride, which had received such sharp wounds for many years.

The advances from England came just in time to act as a counterpoise to the enthusiasm for Russia, which was flying up to the skies, and rapidly reaching the point where such affectionate demonstrations become ridiculous. The grievances of Poland and the so-called martyrdom of the Irish are momentarily forgotten; England is now a great and generous nation, and her Queen a pattern for all Sovereigns; a fact hitherto recognised, because it is undeniable, but qualified by a good deal of satire on Her Majesty's millinery—which does not meet with their approbation. They have, however, discovered that excessive plainness of attire sets off the inherent greatness of the wearer, and that the Queens who have been most remarkable for their exquisite taste in "la toilette," have not been the most respected, nor the most popular. Nevertheless, it is easy to see that an immense amount of esteem is required for acceptance of the widow's head-dress, which no amount of woe could induce a Frenchwoman to adopt, and which they disrespectfully entitle, "L'affreux *bonnet de nuit* de la Reine d'Angleterre."

Criticism is, however, silenced at present, and nothing but admiration is now expressed for "Cette Reine *qui est un Roi*," according to the definition of a writer in "Le Figaro."

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And in all this, the French are perfectly sincere. There is nothing false in the French character; they mean what they say—*while* they say it! But they are impulsive and versatile; with equal sincerity they may say just the reverse, after a short lapse of time. Matter-of-fact Britons may be deceived in consequence, but the French act likewise towards each other, and no one is deceived, because all are aware that "discount" must be allowed here on all transactions, whether friendly or the reverse. Their hatred is not more persevering than their love. The man whom they hated most, Prince Bismarck, is now mentioned without animosity, and although his sayings and doings are closely watched, it is only with the sort of awe-struck curiosity showed by children looking at a caged lion. They even pity his present helplessness, not without some satisfaction at having the opportunity of doing so, but still without any wish to add a drop of bitterness to the cup, though they are not sorry to see him drink it. And yet Prince Bismarck was their worst enemy.

The attention of all France is now engrossed by the "Grandes Manœuvres"—the sham war which every one feels to be the rehearsal of a probable real one. It is a hard time for all, but more especially for young men of the upper classes who have not been inured to hardships and privations. The forced marches, carrying a heavy load under a French sun; the intense thirst which, notwithstanding all prohibitions, tempts the men to drink of any water met with on the road; the want of every comfort to which they have been accustomed; often only bare boards or tiled floors to lie on, when temporary quarters are reached; all this, and much more, is very hard on the young soldiers, but perhaps still harder to bear for the *réservistes*, or men of the reserved force, who have left their homes for the twenty-eight days o compulsory military service, "les vingt-huit jours."

Every year many deaths are registered, either through unavoidable accidents, or through illness caused by hardships endured. The time is an anxious one for mothers and wives, in many cases even calamitous, but in others perhaps really useful, as a means of counteracting the too luxurious habits of many young Frenchmen brought up like spoiled girls, and accustomed to every indulgence. For such Sybarites, of which there are too many, the life of French barracks, where a duke's son lies next to a ploughman's son, on the same sort of pallet (and even on the bare floor), may be a useful lesson when it is not beyond their physical strength, necessarily much reduced by habits of luxurious comfort. The days of "Sandford and Merton" are coming again; but even Tommy Merton could not have led the life of Harry Sandford without a preparatory interval of initiation.

How do people live in Paris (where prices rise constantly) with the small means considered sufficient in so many cases? Pensions are ridiculously small, and an innumerable body of *employés* of all classes have no other resource worthy of mention. At a fixed age they are

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superannuated, to make room for others, and then they must live as they can on their retiring pension. Those that are married, and have sons or daughters, are less to be pitied than the others; the French are ingenious and industrious, family ties are strong, and they will do anything to help their parents. The ingenuity of contrivance with which such home affairs are managed, is really remarkable.

Whole families pack into flats of two or three rooms, out of which they always reserve a *salon*, which once a week is set out to receive visitors, but invariably closed to visitors on any other day. "Madame est sortie," says the concierge, and no one is allowed to go up to the fifth (or even sixth) floor, where they nestle. They work incessantly, the mother sewing and mending, the daughters, perhaps, doing embroidery for the shops. At night they sleep anywhere; perhaps in a corner of a dark passage, screened off; the father or brother on a "shake-down" in the *salon;* the mother and another daughter crammed into a tiny cell, too small for one sleeper, and intolerable for two. It is all dreadfully unwholesome, no doubt, especially as the whole is warmed by a pestilential "Choubersky" stove, poisonous, but cheap, and consequently adopted in all such homes, notwithstanding its dangerous effects. "We must manage to live somehow, and rents are so dear that we cannot stop to think of such things." All are very shabbily dressed; usually the mother is even frightfully untidy; but, they argue, no one can get into their den, "so what does that matter?"

If their means allow of such a luxury, a "femme de ménage" comes for a few hours a day and cooks their dinner, which is always very frugal and limited in quantity. If the "help" cannot be afforded, the mother does the cooking herself, turning everything to account, such as bits of dry bread soaked in the water which has boiled vegetables, and thus made into soup, with pea-pods, &c. If they live near the "Halles Centrales," or principal markets, the mother goes there late in the afternoon, and looks out for articles of food which could not bear a day's delay, and pounces upon these because they are sold at any price. In the case of old bachelors, or widowers "lone and lorn," who are not so expert at bargaining, there is the characteristic resource of what are called, technically, "les bijoux," viz. the remnants sold by cooks of large establishments and by first-class "Restaurants." These are collected from door to door and tumbled together, in no very appetizing fashion; but the seller of the "bijoux" sorts and arranges the various articles, which are then properly "adorned" (*parés*), scraped, and cut into neat pieces, nicely garnished, and set out on clean plates. Customers who are brave enough to forget the antecedents of such dainties, may thus purchase for a trifle portions of the choicest game or the best fish, served on high-class tables, with many other delicacies of tempting appearance. Many old "rentiers" (so-called) living in garrets and sunning themselves all day on benches in the public gardens, where they talk politics with their fellows, get really good dinners in this way.

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The typical French families, such as we have described, are not reduced to such straits; they are frugal in their habits, but, in general, they have a more substantial diet than English families in equivalent positions. "Making up" with tea and bread-and-butter is unknown here. The French family of the class to which we allude despises tea, which is only resorted to as a remedy after some indigestible omelette, or too large a portion of fried potatoes—a favourite treat. On such occasions, *une pincée de thé* (literally, a *pinch* of tea) is put into a large china tea-pot which is then filled up with tepid water. Those who have great pretensions as to their proficiency in the art of making tea, then put the tea-pot over a saucepan of hot water, and thus let it simmer slowly, till they consider it "bien infusé." The liquid thus obtained is poured into a cold cup (or bowl), with several large lumps of sugar, and mixed with about an equal quantity of boiled milk. It is then swallowed by the patient, with mingled resignation and confidence in its virtues, as a sovereign remedy for dyspepsia. Often great astonishment is expressed as to the peculiarities of the English nation, which is so strangely fond of tea—which they consider incomprehensible —and no wonder!

We can recommend for family reading: "Un an d'épreuve," par Mary Floran; "L'Idéal de Germaine," par M. Montal.

Monsieur Grévy.

Surely no political event, however unimportant, could have caused less of a sensation than the death of Monsieur Grévy, who only four years ago was the official head of the French nation! The ex-President was, in fact, completely, absolutely forgotten; no one ever mentioned his name, or seemed to remember his very existence. He was never popular,—his fall was attended with painful circumstances, particularly wounding to the national pride, and no one liked to recall his name. When his death was made known, people who met each other, after talking of the current topics of the day, carelessly threw in the remark, "You know old Grévy is dead?" He had lived to a great age—eighty-four, and what faculties he ever had he seemed to have retained; but he never rose above a sort of sensible, shrewd mediocrity, which was perhaps the real cause of his election.

Who was to take the place of Marshal MacMahon? The prominent men of each party would be rejected by its opponents, so that it would be scarcely possible to form a sufficient majority. The President of the Corps Législatif was in no way remarkable, but, for the Radicals, he had the great merit of being a staunch Republican; and in the sight of the Conservatives, he had the advantage of moderation. He was known to be cool and steady; he was not likely to be carried away by patriotic enthusiasm, nor had he blood-thirsty tendencies. He would never

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shoot an archbishop, nor guillotine any one for political reasons; he even disapproved of capital punishment for the worst criminals. He was said to possess "austere virtue," that is, he led a respectable married life, and indulged in no eccentricities. He was therefore chosen more for what he was not, than for what he really was.

As a President, whatever merit he may have had was of the same negative kind. He was not extravagant—but he was not liberal. He was not violent—but he was not zealous. He kept in the background as far as possible, and was cautious to excess. He had no very high idea of duty, nor the least wish to sacrifice himself for the public good; the one object of his life was to turn his high situation to the best account, and to feather his nest for the benefit of future little Wilsons. He had the greed of the French peasant, from whose race he had sprung. MacMahon proudly spent more than he received, for the public good, and retired without retaining anything of the public money. Grévy saved three-fourths of his allowance, and only spent one-fourth, leaving a large fortune to his heirs, and caring nothing for the good of the nation. He was a fond father, and a still fonder grandfather; everything seemed justifiable that was for the benefit of his daughter and grandchildren. His sense of honour had so completely lost its edge that he could not understand the burst of indignation which followed the discovery of all the ugly doings that had been going on for so long a time at the Elysée, and could not be induced to send in his resignation, which public opinion urgently required. He resisted all pressure with the characteristic stubbornness of his native province, la Franche-Comté, depicted in an old saying;

"Rends-toi, Comtois!"
"Nenni, ma foi!"

In vain the ministers again and again were sent from the Chambre des Députés urging Monsieur Grévy to resign; those who were in Paris at the time will remember the intense anxiety felt by all as, hour by hour, the populace became more excited, and the danger of a serious insurrection more apparent. The Elysée itself was threatened by the mob, before the old man yielded, while he wept piteously: "Vont-ils me renvoyer—comme cela—tout de suite?"

And "*comme cela—tout de suite*," he was obliged to go. Every one said that the shock would kill him, but his feelings were not sufficiently refined for such consequences to be feared. He had his money, his children were safe, and he could not understand why "Daniel" was to be despised. He had lost a high position, which but for Daniel Wilson he would have probably retained; but he had wealth, which he fully appreciated, and his last years were spent in sufficient domestic comfort.

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OUR LIBRARY LIST.

LIFE'S HANDICAP. By RUDYARD KIPLING. (*Macmillan & Co.*) Mr. Kipling's latest collection of stories will be welcomed by all those who have learnt to appreciate "Plain Tales from the Hills," and the fortunes of the Three Soldiers whose life-history Mr. Kipling so deftly describes. In the present volume the Three Soldiers appear once more, and one of the most humorous of the tales, "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney," is occupied with an incident in the life of the Irishman, while one of the most artistic, "On Greenhow Hill," gives the reader an insight into the past history of the stalwart Yorkshireman Learoyd. What strikes one throughout the book is that which is always prominent in all Mr. Kipling's work, the union of great artistic and literary power, with a certain harshness of treatment and feeling which are sometimes associated with the school of realists. We have abundant evidence of the author's mastery in the region of romance. Witness "The man who was," and "Without benefit of Clergy," both of them stories which linger in the memory as the most completely successful of their kind. On the other hand it is difficult to understand how an artist with so much true literary instinct could consent to palm off such experiments on the reader as the stories entitled "At the End of the Passage," and "The Mark of the Beast." It is right, of course, for an author to practise his art in every possible way that may add to its strength and subtleness, but such tentative studies should not be made public for the best of all possible reasons, because they give a wrong idea of Mr. Kipling's powers. As a whole, however, "Life's Handicap" will do much to increase that brilliant reputation which its author has already so deservedly obtained.

AN OLD MAID'S LOVE. By MAARTEN MAARTENS. (*Bentley.*) This is a powerful novel, but it is not a pleasant one. "The wretchedness" (exclaims the Old Maid, in the last page of the book) "of thinking, despite all our conscience tells us, that right can be wrong, and wrong right, because our reason or our passion deems it so—oh! the misery of living false." Upon the psychological problems suggested by these words, the story turns. The characters are powerfully conceived, but they are not sympathetically drawn. We do not feel at

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home with one of them. They talk to us in a foreign tongue, notwithstanding the excellent English in which the book is written. Their motives seem inadequate, their complex impulses unreal, their instincts unnatural. With the exception of the young pastor, a simple, single-minded nature, admirably and consistently drawn, there is about every character, a strong touch of what the Scotch call "thrawnness." In consequence of this perverse twist given to the characters, the situations seem to us often unnatural and strained, even after making due allowance for their foreign setting; and in spite of undeniable cleverness, skill, and originality, the story lacks the quality of reality. There is in the treatment of detail much of the minuteness and realism that characterises the Dutch school of painting, but no single living picture has been added to our portrait gallery. To use a homely simile, the author's coach (of fiction) has been upset by his team of philosophy, psychology, realism, and ideality. All these things we find strangely mixed in these volumes, and though interesting and suggestive in themselves, they do not, in our opinion, constitute a good novel.

A RUSSIAN PRIEST: PSEUDONYM LIBRARY. (*Fisher Unwin.*) Although it is curious to see what a fascination the clerical character possesses for the modern novelist, there is nothing particularly striking about the story of the 'Russian Priest.' The ascetic type of character, as exemplified in Cyril, is not new, nor are the main incidents. Once again one is forced to wonder, as one reaches the end of the book, why it is that in novels of clerical life, the seductive woman of the world invariably throws herself at the head of the unsuspecting hero. Perhaps it is because the situation is sanctified by age, for it is undoubtedly as old as the patriarchs. But the main interest of the book lies in the mere fact that it is Russian; that from its indescribably dreary pictures of the life of the moujiks, and its still more dreary pictures of the cupidity of their religious teachers, we are learning something about that deeply interesting country, which is a perpetual perplexity to Western Europe. For this reason, if for no other, we are quite ready to echo Mr. Gladstone's wish that it may be widely read.

THREE MONTHS' TOUR IN IRELAND. BY MADAME DE BOVET. Translated by MRS. ARTHUR WALTER. 1 vol. (*Chapman & Hall.*) An account of Ireland and things Irish, from the pen of a clever and cultivated Frenchwoman, promises well on the face of it, but unfortunately, the disappointment produced by Madame de Bovet's book is as great as the expectations it arouses. Instead of lively description of men and things, one wades through a wearisome mass of second-hand information, drawn chiefly from guide books and municipal histories, which is as valueless to the student as it is uninteresting to the general reader. Yet there are occasional gleams of humour,

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which are pleasant, nor are signs of an acute observation wanting to show what Madame de Bovet might have done if she had contented herself with a book half the size, and had religiously burnt her reference-books. That a fastidious Frenchwoman's impressions of Irish cooking, Irish beds, and Irish clothes, make very good reading, may easily be imagined, but on the whole, the book is little more than the diary of a conscientious sight-seer, with a prodigious memory for unimportant facts, and only very occasionally deviating into that line of personal observation and original comment, which alone she should have elected to follow.

COLONEL CARTER OF CARTERSVILLE. By F. HOPKINSON-SMITH. (London: *Osgood & McIlvaine.*) 'Colonel Carter of Cartersville' is one of those novels of spurious sentiment which seem to flourish particularly well on American soil. From beginning to end it is *voulu*, tricky, and self-conscious. The author is so determined that the reader shall entertain his own exaggerated affection for his hero, that the said reader finally rebels, and sees in him nothing but an aged, glorified egotist, who cheats his aunt out of a valuable property with such a disinterested air as to draw tears from the deluded spectators. It is clever of course, for there is no denying the fact that American second-rate fiction is never as stupid as ours. But it is a cleverness without weight or substance, which only impresses the reader in the light of a performance creditably got through with little or none of that inevitableness which is the mark of all true imaginative art. Still, the book is readable, for the character-drawing, where least elaborate, is good enough; and the picture of Carter Hall, the old Southern Mansion, is delicately and subtly given.

SIXTY-THREE YEARS ANGLING. By JOHN MACVINE. (*Longmans, Green & Co.*) It is not every one who can speak of the gentle art with the authority of a devotion inspired at seven years old and not exhausted at seventy; but Mr. MacVine was clearly designed by Nature to become "The Compleat Angler," so dear to the soul of Isaak Walton. His first essay in literature has much of the charm of an old man's conversation—full of pleasant reminiscence, breathing a spirit of mellow kindliness and content with the world, and interspersed with anecdotes which, if not exactly fresh, at any rate lose none of their point in the telling.

THE WORKS OF HEINRICH HEINE. Translated by CHARLES GODFREY LELAND. (*Heinemann.*) The first volume of what promises to be an excellent English edition of Heine contains a selection from his prose works, amongst others the ever-delightful "Florentine Nights," and the remarks on Shakespeare's "Maidens and Women" which he

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wrote to accompany a series of plates. It is curious that Heine, who hated England and the English, should have had so profound a veneration for a peculiarly English poet. He has the grace to allow that we English who are "so like our own machinery," and the "very gods of ennui, who, in shining varnished coaches, drive extra post through every country, and leave everywhere a grey dust-cloud of sadness behind them," have at least this one redeeming point, that we produced Shakespeare. It does not seem to occur to him that perhaps that may be less miraculous than the sudden darkening of his usually penetrating intellect when he comes into contact with the English. But we are ready to forgive him his indiscriminating abuse of our nation for the sake of his discriminating appreciation of our national poet, and even to agree with him that at any rate one German has "comprehended Shakespeare better than the English." He loses wonderfully little in the translation as Mr. Leland has translated him, and though the translator's notes sometimes raise a smile, both American and English readers must be grateful to him for his achievement.

DAPHNE, AND OTHER POEMS. By FREDERICK TENNYSON. (*Macmillan & Co.*) It seems but yesterday that we were reading the story of Sappho, and now another volume of poems is given to the world by the veteran poet, who, perhaps more than any man living, breathes the very spirit of the early world. We say more than any man living, for though Lord Tennyson possesses a deeper poetic insight, and a more consummate artistic skill, to his brother belongs a peculiarly youthful exuberance of delight in dwelling upon the luxuriant loveliness of the gods and nymphs "who trod the young earth in the youth of time," which reminds us rather of Shelley and Keats than of any contemporary poet. And yet, in spite of the stately beauty of the verse, in spite of the Greek culture which pervades it, we wonder whether it is given to any modern poet to enter into the true Hellenic spirit. For though it be a Daphne, an Ariadne, a Psyche, or a Halcyone who gives her name to these poems, the subject of one and all is the romantic and spiritualized passion of love, than which nothing is further removed from the feeling of the Greeks. It is a lofty and a beautiful sentiment which Mr. Tennyson expresses, but it is not Greek, and to come upon a metrical version of Swedenborg's "Conjugal Love" in the midst of the tale of Cupid and Psyche gives us a curious mental shock. Making, however, allowance for these modern influences, we recognize gladly the deep religious feeling, and the sure hope that "Good shall conquer ill," too rare in a doubting and despairing age. They are especially marked in "Psyche," and in "King Athamas," the concluding lines of which rank amongst the noblest utterances of English poetry. As regards style there is a certain diffuseness, for which the admirably balanced poems of the poet's brother would hardly have prepared us, and smooth

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as the verse is for the most part, at times it shows curious irregularities, as in such lines as "Foremost image of the One Supreme," and "Was not, and never should be again."

CLYDE AND STRATHNAIRN. By Maj-Gen. Sir Owen Tudor Burne. (*Clarendon Press.*) Under the names of these brave generals, more easily recognized perhaps as Sir Colin Campbell, and Sir Hugh Rose, Sir Owen Burne has written a military sketch of the campaigns which put an end to the Mutiny. He has laboured under the disadvantage of having to tell a thrice-told tale, and has therefore denied himself the pleasure of recounting in detail any of the more stirring scenes of that terrible time. The result of his self-denial is a clear account of marches and sieges, and military operations; but scarcely an adequate picture of the heroes whose names head his work. Of Sir Colin Campbell in particular we hear but little; and though the career of Sir Hugh Rose arouses his biographer to greater enthusiasm, we are still left wishing to hear more of the man and perhaps less of his work. Still General Burne has striven, and not in vain, to have greater justice done to the soldier, whose achievements were probably greater than those of any of the Mutiny heroes, but who for some unexplained reason has scarcely reaped the full reward of his services. For to the conquest of Central India Sir Hugh Rose added that reorganization of the English Army in India, which more than anything else has contributed to the subsequent maintenance of peace and security.

THE STORY OF THE FILIBUSTERS. By James Jeffrey Roche. (*T. Fisher Unwin.*) This new volume of the "Adventure Series" deals with a little known page of American history. We suspect that there are comparatively few who could describe accurately the various phases of Central American politics, or give an account of the adventurous life of William Walker. A Filibuster proper is a modern Viking, one who levies war for his own private ends upon a state with which his own is nominally at peace. Our old civilisation gives little room for such exploits, but in the New World they are of as recent date as 1850, and we read of raids upon peaceful cities, of fierce fights and bloody massacres with a curious sense of having been transported to the times of the Danes. But whether as history or as stirring romance, Mr. Roche's book is eminently worth reading, and perhaps not the least interesting part of it is the abridged life of David Crockett at the end. The bold Filibuster tells his own unvarnished talk in vigorous racy fashion, if with a glorious disregard of the trammels of grammar and style, and we can fancy no better entertainment for boys who have exhausted the supplies of Captain Marryat and his brother fiction-monger than this history, which is fully worthy to take rank with their romances.

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A SYDNEY SIDE SAXON. By ROLF BOLDREWOOD. (*Macmillan & Co.*) By putting his story into the mouth of the hero, Jesse Claythorpe, Mr. Rolf Boldrewood purports to give us Australia from the point of view of the intelligent workman, and at the same time to pass somewhat severe strictures upon the status of the farm-labourer in England and upon English social arrangements in general. If his book were intended for an "earthly tract," recommending emigration as a cure for social evils, it might perhaps be called more interesting than the majority of such productions; but the critic who is led to regard it as a novel, is left at the end wondering where the interest comes in. Miss Possie gives the one touch of romance to the somewhat commonplace record of stock-farming and cattle-branding; but no sooner has she raised our hopes, than the final catastrophe is reached, and the story which seemed just beginning comes abruptly to an end. On the whole we scarcely think that Mr. Boldrewood's latest production is worthy of his earlier works.

BEGGARS ALL. By L. DOUGALL. (*Longmans, Green & Co.*) To the English reader there is a certain strangeness about Mr. Dougall's novel which is probably accounted for by the fact, that though the scene is laid on English soil, it is in fact a purely American product. The author is American, the style is American, the characters and even the landscape, though ostensibly English, are all unmistakably American. The result is that there is an air of unreality about a book which is in many respects distinctly above the average. The plot again presents a curious anomaly, for though it deals with all sorts of sensational incidents and characters such as journalists who are in reality professional burglars, midnight robberies, and matrimonial advertisements, yet such is the power of an American novelist to weaken a situation, that the general impression produced by the book is one of neutral-tinted monotony. This is of itself a sufficiently interesting achievement, and the book is worth reading if only to see how it is done. But it has other and more positive merits. The study of Kent the burglar-journalist, who spends his early years in an orphanage, issuing thence with a personally-evolved system of morality, according to which it is his obvious duty to relieve the unrighteous man of a portion of his ill-gotten gains, and transfer them to his own pockets, is full of clever touches; and the scenes between him and his wife, when she finds him out, show a good deal of quiet power and dramatic sense. On the whole, 'Beggars All' is a book to be recommended to the intelligent novel-reader.

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MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER, 1891.

MR. HENRY JAMES.

No more considerable interest has lately attended the appearance of any play than that excited by the production in a London theatre of Mr. Henry James's dramatic version of his own novel, 'The American.' The reason of that interest is not far to seek. Whatever the merit and the success of our English writers of plays in general, it will not be disputed, we believe, that English literature, in the strict sense of the word, is not, as a rule, greatly enriched by their efforts; when, therefore, it was known that an eminent man of letters, a novelist of the first distinction, had turned his attention to the stage, the event, it was felt, was of an importance to arouse the most legitimate curiosity. It is not our purpose to comment here in any way on Mr. James's work as a dramatist, which, indeed, lies chiefly in the future; but the admirable and lucid style, the command of witty and epigrammatic dialogue with which his readers are already familiar, probably justify the highest hopes of those who care greatly for the renascence of literary excellence in the English drama. It can be no secret to any one who has studied Mr. James's writings, that he has an almost passionate appreciation of fine plays and fine acting; a hundred passages in his critical work give evidence of his close and careful study of the stage and its requirements, whilst the point, always to be largely insisted on in any consideration of his work as a novelist, that he is a consummate artist, should have no less significance, it may be supposed, in the dramatic world than in that of fiction, as the term is usually understood.

In speaking of the work of Mr. Henry James, the first, the imperative thing to be said about it is that it is the work of an

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artist, and of one with a complete and exhaustive knowledge of his art and its resources. Whilst no writer is more vividly modern, Mr. James is, in a sense, an artist as an ancient Greek was an artist; he represses systematically, that is to say, his own personality in view of the work on which he is engaged. By the public, and—shall we say?—by the English public in particular, this supreme quality of workmanship is one of the qualities least esteemed and least appreciated. The generous public hates the Augur's mask; it likes to peep and see the human countenance behind, to shake hands, so to speak, with the wearer, and congratulate him on having a soul like its own. Mr. James never, or by inference only, allows us the smallest peep; his reserve is impenetrable; he invariably treats his characters and his plots with the impartiality of the workman who apprehends that the truth of a thing, and not his own colouring of it, is what, before all, is needed.

We so far share the feeling, whilst absolutely disclaiming any share in the opinion of the public, on this point, as to find a particular pleasure in those *impressions de voyage*, those little sketches of travel collected under the various titles—'A Little Tour in France,' 'Portraits of Places,' 'Foreign Parts'—in which the writer, in the easiest, simplest, most genial manner imaginable, lets us into the secret of his personal impressions, his fine artistic discriminations, his good inns and his bad inns, his chance comrades, his satisfactions and disillusions. It is the charm of individuality that pervades these charming pages, and which, by the happiest instinct, the author has known how to convey without a touch of obtrusive egotism or fatiguing iteration of detail. It needs indeed but a glance over a hundred dreary and futile *impressions de voyage*, to borrow again that convenient term, to understand the rare and consummate skill that goes to the composition of these little articles in which, without any uneasy self-consciousness or self-assertion, the writer takes us into his confidence, shows us what is best worth seeing and the best way to see it, quotes his guide-book with a humorous guilelessness, and makes himself, in short, through his books, the most delightful travelling-companion in the world.

In putting forward these little volumes first, however, we are not doing Mr. James's work, and what we may imagine to be his own estimate of it, the injustice to rank them amongst his foremost productions. The field of literature that he has traversed is wide; both as critic and essayist he has gained

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particular distinction, no less than by the charming papers just mentioned. But it is as a novelist that he has found a foremost place among modern writers; it is his unique and delightful gift of fiction that, above all, claims consideration in treating of his work.

I.

Every writer of original excellence has one or more distinct lines along which his genius developes itself, and with which he becomes, as it were, identified. Mr. James, as we shall endeavour to show, has that larger outlook on the vast human comedy that distinguishes the great masters of fiction; but his earliest stories have a certain character in common that intimately connects them with what for convenience has been termed, the International novel. Mr. James, in fact, might not unreasonably claim to be the inventor of that particular form of romance; and though it would be manifestly unjust to consider him exclusively or even principally in relation to it, since much of his most masterly as well as his most delicate work does not touch on the International question—that is to say, the interfusing influences of America and Europe—at all; yet there is no doubt that it was his earlier productions, 'The American,' 'The Europeans,' 'Daisy Miller,' 'An International Episode,' and half-a-dozen other tales on the same line, that won for him in the first instance much of the wide reputation he enjoys. Mr. James must at some time have studied his countrymen and countrywomen with extraordinary minuteness and detachment of vision. To him might be applied what Sainte-Beuve somewhere says of La Bruyère: "En jugeant de si près les hommes et les choses de son pays, il paraît désintéressé comme le serait un étranger, et déjà un homme de l'avenir." This disinterested view has, we believe, brought Mr. James into some discredit with a certain section of his compatriots; the fresh perception and keen insight he has brought to the contemplation of his country and theirs has not always pleased them. They are probably unaware of the debt of gratitude they owe him. It is more apparent to the English mind, which, contrasting its knowledge of America now with what it was some twenty or thirty years ago, perceives how largely, among other causes, Mr. James has contributed to that knowledge; how clear a light, and how favourable a light, has been thrown upon the subject by his interpretations. This is the more valuable that there can be no suspicion of the author's impartiality; that if, as is the fact,

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there is in the course of his stories hardly a contest between an American and a European in which the American does not show the finer of the two, it is, we are persuaded, because, given the characters and the circumstances, the American must of necessity show the finer of the two. Nothing, indeed, could be more impossible than to treat Mr. James as even remotely a partisan; nothing could be further removed from his method, from the large and even glance he turns on one character and another. When he convinces us, it is through his presentment of the truth of things, never through the expression of his personal bias. He himself tells us somewhere that it is his constant habit to tip the balance; and, if he had not told us, we might have divined it from his work. It is probably a natural quality that he has cultivated to a degree that makes it impossible for him in contemplating a subject seriously to look at it from one point only; he turns it in his hands, so to speak, as one turns a globe, considering it from every side. This habit of mind is, of course, one of the finest and most essential that a writer can bring to his work; and if it occasionally exhibits the defect of its quality in carrying disinterestedness to the verge of coldness, it has the supreme merit of leaving the reader's judgment free, of never affronting him by undue insistence on one point to the hindrance of another.

It results naturally from the perfection to which Mr. James has brought this particular method of observation, that the men and women of his tales should have, both physically and mentally, an air of solidity and reality only occasionally attained to in the same degree; he sees them impartially, he depicts them unerringly, with an extreme delicacy and distinction; they are set in clear and open daylight, in a perspective as wide, in an atmosphere as free as those of the two continents of which he treats. His characters are types and yet individual; they belong at once to the universe and to their own epoch; they have, in short, that combination of the general and the particular that is indispensable to the complete vitality of a creature of the imagination; and they stand out in a relief that is the bolder, perhaps, that they are, as a rule, provided with little more scenery for their surrounding than is requisite to indicate the local colouring of the story. To Mr. James, we gather from his novels as a whole, life presents itself not pictorially, as a number of pictures, that is, in which human action displays itself against the vast scenic background of the world, not

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dramatically, as a succession of scenes culminating in a logical catastrophe (though both these points of view are necessarily included in his scheme of work), but primarily as a series of problems, moral, social, or psychological, to be worked out and solved. An involved situation, a moral dilemma, the giant and complex grasp of society in its widest sense, upon the individual —these and such as these are the problems to the tracing out and solution of which he brings an extreme fineness and subtlety, subtle and fine as the workings of the human mind hardly conscious of its own movement from point to point. It may be said at once, that in exercising his admirable gift of psychological insight and imagination, Mr. James frequently presupposes great attention on the part of his readers, and an intelligence of reception hardly less than his own intelligence of representation. He is one of the finest of analysts; but nevertheless he not seldom reaches a point where he ceases to analyse and simply suggests with a delicacy conveying the flattering assumption that the reader has keenness and imagination enough of his own to follow up the writer's suggestion with as much certainty as when, a hand being seen at a window, it may be inferred that a human being stands behind it. As a fact, we believe that Mr. James flatters his public too much. The average reader has neither brains nor imaginations to follow out a suggestion; he yawns at psychology; he is apt to resent explanation and non-explanation alike. He loves a good downright legend: "This is a wood," "This is a barn-door," which he who runs may read; he loves an obvious plot, an honest mystery, a conclusion that rounds off everything. All that is a point of view already over-discussed perhaps, and for which there will doubtless be always much to be said; we only refer to it now, because whilst the lovers of Mr. James's stories find a charm beyond that of any other, in his method, at once delicate and powerful, it may probably always forbid his volumes the honour of the railway bookstall, or the seventy thousandth copy of the cheap edition.

In using the word "powerful," it must be understood in the wide sense in which it is applicable to Mr. James's work. There is a usual and perfectly legitimate sense in which it is employed, as expressing a certain movement of passion or energy on the writer's part, through which certain scenes stand out from the remainder of the work, and move the reader in his turn to an emotion that for ever remains in his memory. Such scenes as these are rare with Mr. James; it is perhaps an excess of the

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artistic sense of detachment, that occasionally compels him, when we should expect him to be most emotional, to be most restrained. His power is of another kind altogether; it arises from a profound knowledge of what he is writing about, from what seems sometimes an almost exhaustive knowledge of human nature; his anatomy is perfect; every hidden bone and muscle is in its place. His surface (to change the metaphor) may be level, but it never rings hollow; its foundations are deep as those of the life of which he treats; the result is that impression of sustained power that is met with only in the great masters, that is *the* distinguishing mark of the great masters. Others may charm us—and claim our eternal gratitude for the charm—by their imagination, their fancy, their genius even; but somewhere or other there is a gap in the carpentry, and through the chink the light of disillusion shines. With Mr. James, we tread solidly and look at his presentment of life without a misgiving. It is the first in quality, it is the most essential boon a writer can give us.

We might refer in this connection, and as being among the most perfect presentments of his art, to two of Mr. James's earlier and less well-known stories—'Madame de Mauves,' and 'Washington Square.' The first of these is a story of no great length, with hardly any plot; one of those subtle problems of character and situation in which the author takes pleasure, and ended finally by an epigram, as his stories occasionally find themselves ending, after a fashion somewhat disconcerting to the reader. It is, in brief, the story of a young American girl married to a French *roué*, M. de Mauves, with whom one of her own countrymen falls passionately in love. The point of the story lies in the fashion in which this passion is treated by the husband, the lover, and Madame de Mauves herself; and one has only in reading it to consider what might be made of this apparently hackneyed theme by a superficial, a commonplace, or a vulgar writer to appreciate the delicate originality and powerful handling Mr. James has brought to its treatment. The whole story is in low relief, without a salient incident; its strength lies in the sense that the roots of the faintly-blooming flowers of the little drama reach down to the deepest springs of human action; that the underlying strata of life presupposed by the surface are familiar to the writer as the surface itself. The other story, 'Washington Square,' is much longer, but its *motif*, given in abstract form, is hardly more novel than that of 'Madame de Mauves.' The scene is chiefly laid in New York, and it is the history of a

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young girl, who, accredited with the prospect of inheriting a large fortune at her father's death, is pursued by a needy adventurer, with whom she falls blindly in love. The father, as in duty bound, opposes the marriage; the young girl, after many struggles, consents at last to put her lover to the test; he disappears, and the girl lives and dies an old maid. That is all the plot; but this little history, that for sustained and masterly treatment may be compared to 'Eugénie Grandet' (which for the rest it does not in the least resemble), holds the reader's interest from beginning to end. It has not the special charm of Balzac's masterpiece; the heroine, Catherine, a difficult character to draw, and drawn with extraordinary skill, is represented as a dull girl of limited intelligence and fixed ideas, who wins our sympathy indeed, but appeals much less to the imagination than the immortal Eugénie; as the house in Washington Square yields in romantic suggestion to that of the old and faded mansion with the broken stair that we have each of us inhabited in turn. But in historical accuracy and broad grasp of the foundations of life, there is no work with which the American novel can be so fitly mated as with that of the great French master.

II.

These are only two of various masterpieces that Mr. James has given to the world. He has written about a dozen novels, and a considerable number of short stories; and his treatment of the two forms of narrative is sufficiently distinct to demand that they should be considered somewhat apart.

It is a commonplace of literature that the short story, brought to so much perfection by the French, has never flourished in England. Half-a-dozen causes might be assigned for the fact; but it is probably chiefly due to the inferior sense of art as art, possessed by the English as compared with the French. The short story is above all a matter of form, of proportion; and the English sense of form, in respect of literature, is apt to be conspicuously wanting. There are exceptions, of course, and notable ones; but we speak of the rule. Mr. James, whose particular genius and method of work touches that of the French on more sides than one, is nowhere more French than in this; he satisfies our sense of form, of truth of proportion beyond any other writer in the English language that we could name. His shorter stories are of a length varying from a few pages to nine or ten chapters; but in the best of them, of whatever length, and that

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includes a large proportion, the form is perfect. It would be hard to find a flaw in the construction of 'Daisy Miller,' 'The Madonna of the Future,' 'Four Meetings,' 'The Pension Beaurepas,' and 'Benvolio;' or, to come down later, in 'The Siege of London,' 'The Author of Beltraffio,' 'The Aspern Papers,' 'The Solution,' and a dozen others that might be named. These delightful stories have, of course, a hundred other claims on our admiration; wit, humour, pathos, a charming gaiety, acute observation of life and character; but it is the faultless skill with which they are framed, that above all, perhaps, "places" them as consummate works of art. The short story, properly treated as such, deals with a single idea, an isolated situation—a rule from which Mr. James never swerves; but much of the singular perfection of his short stories lies in the fact that while the idea, the situation is exhibited, developed and worked out to its legitimate conclusion within the compass of the few pages, more or less, that he allows himself, it is in fact no more isolated than it is possible for any situation in real life to be; it stands with its just relation to the universe exactly indicated, bound to the common life by the million threads that unite common humanity. This is, of course, only to say that when the author sits down to write a short story, he knows his business; but that particular knowledge is so rare among us, that some insistence on it in this case may be permitted. In longer novels, his method is of necessity somewhat different. Like all the greater novelists, Mr. James is interested not merely in the telling of a story, properly so called, in the working out of a situation, the conduct of a love-affair, the development of a plot, but with the entire moving drama of life, the great human comedy, in which situations take their place as mere incidents. In 'The Portrait of a Lady,' in 'The Bostonians,' 'The Princess Casamassima,' 'The Tragic Muse,' and in a less degree 'The Europeans,' 'The American,' 'The Reverberator,' we feel less that the curtain has risen on a comedy of manners or of plot, than on a vast section of society, and of society considered with especial reference to some of its more modern developments. In his earlier as in some of his later work, Mr. James, as we have seen, selected the wide field of the opposing and harmonizing influences of America and Europe; in 'The Bostonians,' he touches the question of Women's Rights; in 'The Princess Casamassima,' we are with the Socialists; whilst his most recent book, 'The Tragic Muse,' sets before us the curious relations that the latest whirligig has brought round between art, and society in its

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conventional sense. As a novelist, Mr. James is necessarily concerned with the manifestation of any particular phase with which he is dealing, through the experience of individuals; but it is obvious that for this a large canvas, a complex scheme is needed, in which perfection of form has in some degree to yield to the exigencies of the spectacle of the huge haphazard activities, the apparently crude fatalities of human existence. There are readers who will always prefer Mr. James's shorter stories, their delicate manipulation, their exquisite style, and perfect proportion; there are others who will find a deeper interest in the larger issues brought before them in his longer narratives. The question is not one that need trouble us; it is the privilege of an artist to affect men's minds in very various ways, and there is no danger that Mr. James's admirers will quarrel among themselves.

A novelist's presentment of life, or more justly, perhaps, his choice, his selection out of life, is one thing; the way in which he personally looks at life and appreciates it, is obviously another. A distinction has always to be sought between a writer's mental attitude and the results given to the world; and to disengage the man from the artist, the artist from the man, must not unfrequently present itself as a problem a little resembling that of Shylock's pound of flesh. With some writers, indeed, the task is sufficiently easy; it may simply be abandoned. The author puts, as it is called, his whole soul into his work; the shaping artist plays a secondary part; the result may be brilliant, charming, passionate, sentimental or the reverse; but it at least presents no particular problem; the author and his work are one. To others, again, the picturesque, the emotional, the moral or the sensational side of existence may appeal so strongly, that an irresistible impulse leads them inevitably to reveal their idiosyncrasy through their presentation of life. With a writer so impersonal as Mr. James, the case is different, the problem more complicated. He has to be considered primarily in his artistic capacity; it is his supreme distinction that he invariably includes and excludes as an artist, not as a man; and his work lends itself to negative deductions, as it were, rather than to positive ones. To speak, for instance, of his writing as ironical, is on the surface to state an untenable proposition; he is genial (one might rather say), he is good-humoured, he is indifferent, he is at moments extraordinarily tender; it would, we believe, be impossible to find from beginning to end of his works one cruel or

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sarcastic word. It is only by degrees we come to a perception of the profound irony implied by that attitude of good-humoured neutrality, of genial indifference. His books, on the whole, strike one as optimistic; a certain kindly view of the events and accidents of life pervades them; they deal by preference with the saner rather than with the more morbid side of humanity; but they create finally a sense of aloofness on the part of the writer that seems to imply a profound disenchantment, what we have ventured to call a profound irony lurking at the root of his conception of life, a sense of the singular sadness, futility and vanity on the whole, of the beings whom he observes and depicts as they cross and recross the stage of the world. As might be expected, this is less apparent in his earlier than in his later work; it is nowhere more apparent than in his latest novel, 'The Tragic Muse.' In that remarkable book, modern to a degree that makes all other novels seem for the moment old-fashioned and out-of-date, by comparison, what is termed the general and the particular is carried to the last point; the central figure and the central motive, that is to say, being a woman of an artistic type common to all time, brought into contact with the newest modes and developments of culture and society. The theme is one that lends itself with particular felicity to the author's especial genius for unimpassioned observation; it is developed with the mature strength of a splendid and virile talent; but the final impression it creates is of something a little hard, perhaps, a little too irresponsible.

The impression, we must immediately add, arises in great measure from the fact that the scheme of the story does not happen to include any of those characters that Mr. James knows how to treat with a particular kindness, with a genial warmth even, springing from a larger sympathy with human nature than the most discriminating observation can supply. It is entirely characteristic of the author, that it is not, as a rule, in the delineation of his principal heroes and heroines that we discover this kindly and sympathetic note, but in that of his humbler characters. There is no commoner or cheaper device of the inferior novelist than to seize upon one or another weak or absurd side of a human being and hold it up to scorn; to pillory a character for some physical or mental defect, to paint the smaller vices with an air of being above the human race, in colours as false as the follies that are described. Mr. James not only (it need not be said) has nothing to do with vulgarities

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such as these, not only he never laughs at, but always with his characters; he does much more. In his treatment of the old, the poor, the humble, the disgraced by fortune, such as come into all work that embraces wide fields of human action, there is a tenderness equalled by no other writer that we can recall. We feel disposed to insist upon this quality because it is the most personal, perhaps the only personal note he allows to modify the rigour of disinterested observation. Sometimes, in fact, he dramatises it, so to speak, by leaving the story to be narrated by an imaginary person, as where he deals with the disillusioned painter in 'The Madonna of the Future;' with Mr. Ruck, the ruined American father, in 'The Pension Beaurepas;' or Caroline Spencer, in 'Four Meetings.' Elsewhere, however, those humbler individuals who have the honour to hold (as we judge) an especial place in the author's regard, take their place among the other characters in an impersonal narrative; we need only mention Madame Grandoni, in 'Roderick Hudson;' Miss Birdseye, in 'The Bostonians;' the old violinist, Lady Aurora, Miss Pynsent, in 'Princess Casamassima,' to illustrate our meaning. And in connection with this point may be mentioned the particular power of pathos shown by Mr. James on the very rare occasions—not half-a-dozen perhaps in the whole course of his books—that he cares to exercise it; that pathos which, in its entire freedom from self-consciousness, from the implied invitation, "Come, let us weep, for this is a melancholy occasion," is among the rarer gifts of the novelist. Few people, we should think, could read unmoved the death of Miss Birdseye, which in simple and suggestive beauty recalls the description of the passage of Christiana across the river of death in the 'Pilgrim's Progress;' or that other chapter in 'The Princess Casamassima,' where the tenderly humorous enhances the pathetic, as the devoted little dressmaker comforts herself on her deathbed with the illusions of her adopted son's greatness; or again, in altogether another key, the scenes darkening to the tragic close of the same novel. These passages, of an absolute simplicity, show how far Mr. James's genius can, with his rare permission, carry him in that direction; though the very rarity of the occasions on which he indulges it, enhances perhaps its final value.

III.

This, indeed, may be said in general of what is emotional and of what is descriptive in Mr. James's novels. No one can

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describe better than he can; but he has apparently decided, and we think on the whole justly, that novels are not the proper vehicle for descriptions of scenery as such, and we seldom come across more than is requisite for the mere *mise en scène*. We say justly, on the whole; because whilst accepting the theory as true, it is possible to recall novelists who indulge in a richer decoration for their characters than Mr. James does, and with whom we find no ground for quarrel on that score. In the same way with the emotional; Mr. James for the most part avoids it, travels round it, gets at his effects without it; and considering the floods of futile words, the pages of sentiment that do duty for passion and feeling, we are again disposed to say that he is right. Nevertheless, emotion is a great weapon in the hand of a master; Mr. James, as he proves in passages here and there, wields it with as much mastery as any one; there are moments when we find ourselves wishing he would wield it a little oftener.

A novelist, however, is obviously what the grace of heaven and his own wit make him. Mr. James may be only sometimes descriptive and occasionally emotional; but he is witty, he is humorous, he is epigrammatic; he is learned—consummately learned in human nature. He is, in brief, pre-eminently the novelist of character and observation. Of the ordinary resources of the story-teller, indeed, Mr. James is apt to avail himself but sparingly. Of love-making proper, for instance, there is but little in his volumes. There are lovers, of course, and marriages, —often unhappy ones; but these are not the main business on hand. That lies in tracing through delicate and minute observation of the surface, the hidden sources that determine action. His imagination, which may be held to be wanting in richness in certain directions, is of extraordinary strength in the conception of these springs of motive and of conduct, of the action and interaction of the human mind. In the same way, the brilliant procession of heroines that passes through his pages, seem to be there less to illustrate a charming side of life, than because no picture of life, charming or the reverse, is complete without them. A good deal might be said about Mr. James's treatment of women. One's first impression (and even one's last impression, perhaps) is that he treats them coldly; that in his moments of keenest insight into their motives and sentiments, he still views them, as it were, from outside, and at a distance. This, of course, may simply be taken as part of his disinterested treatment in general; but the impression of coldness remains, even

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with the fresh memory of the tenderness of touch that goes to the delineation of Miss Birdseye and Miss Pynsent, of the genial mood in which he gives us Olive Chancellor and the incomparable Henrietta Stackpole, and the mingled humour and gentleness of his presentment of Pansy Osmond, that peerless little flower among *jeunes filles*. For whilst other authors often leave on our mind a sense of their affection, their sympathy with, their admiration for their heroines, of their endowing them with delightful qualities for private ends of friendship, Mr. James stands aloof from all that. His women, good and bad, pass before him, and he views each in turn with a careful and impartial eye; he cares, he gives us to believe, no more for Isabel Archer or Madame de Cintré than for Madame Merle, or Mademoiselle Noémie. The method has its advantages; the reader is never torn in two by the antagonism between his own preferences and those forced upon him by the author; he could never hate the worst of Mr. James's women, and he has one or two very bad ones, as he hates the virtuous Laura Bell. And yet there are moments when we feel that he might maintain a rather less distant attitude. We feel it, because we feel that the author's position towards certain of his heroes is, without any detriment to the attitude of "detachment," of a somewhat warmer character; we are sure that he is on terms of the friendliest intimacy with Ralph Touchett and Lord Warburton, with Nick Dormer, and even with poor little Hyacinth Robinson.

For the rest, we can feel nothing but gratitude for the long and varied succession of portraits that Mr. James hangs before our eyes; his portraiture is always true and brilliant; he seizes the salient points with unerring skill, and there are faces and figures in his books that live in our memory as part of the more intimate experience of life. We can imagine certain of his women, in the future, forming part of the furniture of the nineteenth century, as in another art the women of Lely and of Reynolds furnish for us the court of Charles II., and the social life of George III. It is needless to say that none of these portraits are made to order; more than that, Mr. James, as we have intimated, shows no special predilection for one type over another; that is the good side of the rather melancholy indifference of which we were accusing him just now. One of his earliest successes associated him with a certain exceptional type of the American girl; but admirably as he depicts her, we cannot perceive that he scores successes less admirable, in his delineation

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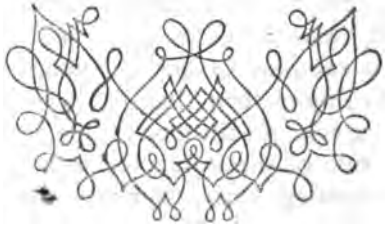
of types who have little in common with Daisy Miller. Nevertheless, his heroines being almost exclusively of one nationality —with the exception of the charming Biddy Dormer, English, and English again to her very finger-tips, he has given us no heroine of importance who is not American—one or two characteristics appear in almost all; though varying so much in colour and degree in one and another, that we hardly know how to define them otherwise than as the breath of New England animating its daughters. This is vague, but not more vague perhaps than the impalpable spirit that Mr. James has caught with so certain an instinct and communicated so delicately to every woman, young or old, who hails from the Transatlantic shores in his novels. It is companion to that hardly less vague, but no less certain breath of what we may venture to term the American tradition that flutters through Mr. James's volumes; a breath too little deliberate, too little conscious of itself to be named Puritanism, but associated with a certain conception of the American character that no one has illustrated more happily than Mr. James himself. It might, we say again, be hard to define; it might be difficult to put one's finger on a passage and say: "it is here or there"; it may be summed up finally, perhaps, in the impression left by the volumes, as a whole, that the good and evil of the world indifferent to the author as an artist, are not indifferent to him as a man. To quote his own words: "There is one point where the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is, in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer." It is in this sense that we seem to distinguish throughout Mr. James's work the faint aroma of the Puritan tradition.



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ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS,

AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY."

CHAPTER V.

THE Dean was the last person in the world to be pleased with the impertinent familiarity of address which was Miss Stone's imitation of easy good manners. Yet on the whole he did not regret her arrival, as having hastily sent for his horse while he took a dish of coffee in the Book-room, he trotted homewards in the pleasant evening sunshine. For most of the way his road followed the curves of the Liffey. The hurrying river that swirled and foamed under the bower, ran here less swiftly, mingling with its own coffee-brown colour the reflected tones of its banks. The unpollarded willows grew luxuriantly beside it. Here they tossed their tremulous, gleaming wealth of foliage against a background of dark woods, there drooped it across a great mill-wheel or down into the hurrying water. Every willow on the road between Lucan and Dublin was known to Swift, who was a lover and a planter of willows. To-day, however, such few points in the surrounding scenery as he otherwise usually observed claimed no share in his meditations. His natural sensitiveness of disposition made it intolerably painful to him to see suffering, either mental or physical, and ready to do almost anything to relieve it. The same sensitiveness by a common paradox, made him eager to fly from sight or knowledge of it. Besides, he had his own reasons for avoiding everything outside public matters which could tend to excite him. For thirty years he had bent the whole strength of his strong will to subduing an extreme nervous excitability which his pride had usually helped him to conceal from the world, but of which he himself was painfully aware. The first time he felt his reason totter under its stress, he had seen that the choice before him was not one between

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common self-government and common absence of it, but between sanity and madness; not immediate, but gradual and inevitable madness. From that time his whole struggle had been to achieve an existence of philosophic calm, in so far as that was compatible with the fulfilment of his legitimate ambitions, and the partial satisfaction of those affections which he had not merely in common with other men, but beyond them. He had been in a measure successful. The virulence and other defects of his pen may lend a touch of insanity to his writings in the eyes of a modern reader, but the contemporaries of his earlier days at least, saw nothing unusual in them but their power. He had been fortunate enough to find a woman who could both win and return his love, and yet agree to share his life but incompletely, her character and social circumstances combining to make her satisfied with her position so long as she was content with him. Thus it was years before he had cause to acknowledge that in avoiding marriage he had not avoided the difficulties and disturbances that are inseparable from all close human ties.

So long as he was in the presence of Esther's despair his sympathetic distress was greater than his annoyance at the stormy scene to which she had subjected him; but as he rode home by himself, annoyance tended to become the uppermost feeling in his mind. In the most complex questions of conduct there is usually a moment when there is something which it would be right and tolerably simple to do; but like other "tides in the affairs of men" it is apt to pass very quickly, and afterwards every course involves a certain amount of wrong. That moment was long past in the history of his relations with Esther Vanhomrigh. However he treated her, he never felt easy in his mind as to the wisdom, or the justice of his conduct. Yet he did not exactly reproach himself, for he justly considered that the chances had been a million to one that such a passion as Esther's for him would prove a madness as brief as it was violent and singular. He might, had he been other than he was, have apprehended the peculiar depth and fervour of her emotional nature, but he could not be expected to realize his own fascination, the brilliant mind, the endlessly varied character, the mingled charm and terror of his ways, which made all the world beside little and insipid to her who had once fallen under his spell.

"I am very unlucky," he said, spurring his horse into a canter;

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"she seemed to have sense enough once, but now—Gad, of us two she's by far the maddest. Heaven send us safe from womenkind—except little P. P. T! P. P. T. is a true philosopher, and never stormed and wept at poor fond Rogue in all her dear little days, not even when he richly deserved it. I'll go see her at supper-time and we'll be merry."

The twilight had fallen and the oil-lamps were twinkling when he rode into Dublin. Hastily changing his riding-dress, he left the Deanery by the garden door and was about to call a passing hackney coach, when he remembered that the old man at the corner had been sick lately. He was an honest old man, who sold pies and never begged, and the Dean who usually dedicated special economies to special charities, reserved for him all the sixpences he might have spent on hackney coaches, and did not spend. He was tired with his expedition to Cellbridge and in a hurry for P. P. T. and her supper, but as the old man was sick, he must not drive in a coach. So he strode off down St. Nicolas Street to Ormonde's Quay, dropping a sixpence in among the pies as he passed the corner of St. Patrick's.

When he reached the small house at Ormonde's Quay, he went upstairs to the parlour three steps at a time, and opening the door a little but remaining outside it, said in a whining voice:

"Madams, good madams, here's a poor gentleman that has not tasted herrings these three nights. For the love of God, ladies, one little herring at three a penny."

"Why, that's Presto!" cried Mrs. Johnson.

"Pray now, come in or go out," she added, somewhat tartly; "you are putting Dingley and me in a deuce of draught."

The two ladies had just sat down to supper.

"Herrings!" he cried triumphantly, shutting the door behind him.

"It does so happen that we have 'em to-night," returned Hetty, "though we have had much more delicate fare these three nights, if you had chosen to come. Ha'n't we, D. D.?"

Dingley, who appeared to be drawing a complete fish's backbone out of her mouth by some kind of jugglery, was naturally a full minute before answering:

"That we have, Dean. Besides, Hetty, you know we only have 'em to-night because that Mrs. O'Reilly is so very disappointing. And indeed 'tis quite a favour to get one of her fat partridges, but they can't be depended upon. I said to Mrs.

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O'Reilly only yesterday, when she was at the door with her basket—'Now, my good Mrs. O'Reilly,' I says——"

"O pray, pray, D. D.," cried Mrs. Johnson, "don't begin with your 'I says' and 'she says' till the next wet Midsummer day, when we shall have time to get to the end of 'em."

"Faith, I love a herring," said the Dean, sitting down opposite Mrs. Johnson at the small table; "but I admire D. D. who eats 'em every night of her life, and don't yet know how to eat 'em like a Christian."

After twenty years he had still not given up hoping to improve poor Dingley's manners, nor being irritated at his failure to do so.

"We don't eat 'em every night of our lives," retorted P. P. T. "I wish you'd not make us and our housewifery the laughing-stock of Dublin. 'Tis too bad of you, Presto."

"Sure we never was so scurvy mean as you say, serving nothing for your supper but three herrings in a Delft plate," quoth Dingley, indignantly. "You know we have real chaney which you gave us yourself, Dean. I use it when Hetty's well enough to wash it, but she won't have me do't since I cracked the tureen, which was not my fault at all."

"Poor little dear P. P. T.," said Swift gently, looking across the table and ignoring Dingley. "She must be very sick if she cannot take a jest. Does Presto make a laughing-stock of Stella? He thought he was always trying to make his poor jangling old lyre tuneable enough to do her honour."

"You have done me a very great honour," returned P. P. T. holding her head high. "If others don't think so the more's their folly."

"Good girl!" said he reaching across the table to pat her hand. "That's the way to speak. Presto often thinks P. P. T. the only reasonable woman that ever he knew. That's why he loves her and always will, as hope saved."

He smiled at her and she could not possibly have helped smiling back at him.

"But what ails you to-night, poor pretty Pet?" he asked. "You have ate nothing but bread for your supper. Go now and lie down on your couch and let Dingley, that's never sick, make you some broth."

Yes, P. P. T. was ailing; she was generally ailing now, but the couch Presto had given her for her comfort, she considered too good to be used, and put away under holland in the best parlour.

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And she would not for worlds be so unmannerly as to leave the table before the rest of the company. When the frugal meal was over, Swift opened without remark the folding-doors that led into that solemn apartment, the best parlour, and pulled the holland cover off the couch; then, suddenly catching up Hetty in his arms, he ran in and deposited her upon it.

"Ugh, you're heavy, Madam Pet!" he cried, shrugging his shoulders. "Yet not so heavy as you was. If you'll but promise me not to grow lean, I'll never again say you're fat—for indeed 'tis a lie. I hate skinny women like Dingley," he added in a lower voice.

Here Dingley, who was luckily somewhat deaf, followed with a cushion for Hetty's head, but he took it from her.

"Pray go to your own chair in the parlour, D. D.," he said. "I know 'tis the only thing you love. If you push it but a little back I can swear with a clear conscience I had my eye upon you the whole evening. 'Tis more than you can do for me, since in ten minutes yours will be shut."

"I shall not be asleep, if that's what you would say, Dean," returned Dingley, with dignity. "I close my eyes to think the better." This dialogue had passed between the two an incalculable number of times.

Swift arranged the cushion under Hetty's head less awkwardly than might have been expected, sat down by her and kissed her hand five times; a kiss for every finger beginning at the thumb. She smiled faintly, but made no response. This was only as usual, for she was essentially undemonstrative, and such small endearments as passed between them had always been mostly on his side.

"I loathe Dingley," he said, when he had accomplished the five kisses. "I hate, I could cheerfully damn Dingley."

His voice was lowered so that his objurgations could not reach the ears of their innocent object.

Hetty laughed a little.

"Poor D.! I love her well enough—that is, as well as I could love any woman I was compelled to live with."

"You are not compelled to live with her," returned Swift eagerly. "We can do well enough now without her money."

"'Tis not a matter of money," replied Hetty. "Even were it so, 'twould not be just to throw off D. D. so soon as we could spare her money. She could not live without ours, and I believe

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she would be ill without my chidings; they're like letting blood to her."

"Unkind Dallah! You think of Dingley and not of Presto, whose comfort is quite spoiled by her. When the debt on the Deanery is cleared, I will make a debt on D. D. I will pay her to go."

"You will only have to pay some one else to come, and hate her just as much when she is there," she replied. "Besides, Presto, we are at Dingley's mercy. She has of necessity shared our secrets."

"No, none of importance," he answered, meaning that she had known nothing of the marriage.

"I know not what you call important," she replied coldly. "She has known much more of our intimacy than any one besides ourselves, and though she herself must perforce believe it innocent, if she be angry with us she will talk, and the world will say she was our dupe."

"A fig for the world! You wasn't used to trouble for what the world said when you was younger, Madam Pet."

"No, indeed, I did not," she returned. "But I cannot help troubling when such things happen."

"What things, dear goose?" asked he, taking up her fan, and fanning her with it. "I know there's some envious chit of sixteen been saying you'll never see five and thirty again—for even Envy would never guess your age—and wondering what your Grattans and Fords and Delanys can see in an old maid, Pish!" And he tapped her lightly on the cheek with the fan.

"No, Presto; I don't think your chit of sixteen like to be troubled with envy of me. 'Tis not that. Something vastly unpleasant has happened. But you're going to spend to-morrow at Delville, you say? Ask dear good Delany about it. He'll tell you what it is."

"Why is Delany to know more of P. P. T.'s affairs than P. D. F. R.? Tell me yourself, P. P. T., I insist. 'Tis some trifle, I'll warrant, that that fool Delany has hatched out to look important over."

"Dr. Delany is no fool, Presto, as you know well, and the matter may seem a trifle to you, but 'tis both sad and mortifying to me. But I'll not tell you."

"Ah, but you shall—you must. How can you fancy anything that gives his de' char' pretty Pet uneasiness can be indifferent to

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the Fond Rogue? Pray try and think kindly of Presto, who thinks so kindly of you."

"Oh, well, since you insist." She paused and went on reluctantly. "I went this morning to pay my wedding visit to Sophia Walls—Smith I should say. You know Sophy always was a favourite of mine when she was quite a little miss, though Lord knows I detest most children, especially girls. They showed me into the dining-parlour and kept me drumming with my heels for twenty minutes, and then down comes Delany, who happened to be in the house. And what do you think he came to tell me? Sophy, if you please, was not permitted to come, and Mrs. Walls was too ashamed. So 'twas he very good naturedly undertook to do Mr. Smith's dirty work, lest the man himself should do it and be more insulting than was necessary. For he came, Presto, to tell me that Mr. Smith had desired his wife not to receive visits from me."

"Infernal, insolent puppy!" cried Presto indignantly.

"Oh, he was kind enough to admit I might be virtuous," continued P. P. T., calm but bitter. "But he seems to have heard something or other about you and me, and decrees that his Sophia's friends must be, like King Somebody's wife, above suspicion. Mrs. Walls is sincerely sorry, poor woman; 'tis none of her fault, nor Sophy's either."

"I am grieved that you should lose your friend, who was a good girl, and grieved too that she should have tied herself to a pretending, censorious fool. I'll not call that a trifle. But as to disturbing ourselves because the fellow reflects upon our conduct, we should be very foolish to do that, dear Dallah. I've heard tell he was ignorant enough at the University, though here he sets up for a fine scholar, and most like his virtue too's one of those new brooms that sweep a bit too clean."

"I'll not affect more indifference than I feel," returned Hetty, "though I know 'tis to my own forgetting disposition that I must chiefly look for comfort."

"Sure P. P. T. cannot think it Presto's fault," cried Swift, surprised and nettled by her manner. "What has he not suffered for the sake of discretion? Yes, and often was discreet in spite of P. P. T. And never mentioned her to his oldest friend but with infinite precautions."

"I told you I had no wish to talk of the matter," said Hetty, beginning to rise from her couch. "But Presto cannot expect me to be as careless and ignorant of the world as I was twenty years since."

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This unpleasant incident had also reminded her of what she oftenest contrived to forget; namely, that she had not received the absolute and unswerving devotion which she had once expected, and which might have compensated her for some social disadvantages. But she kept that reflection to herself.

The agitations of the day had been almost too much for Swift's equanimity, and now the peaceful evening he had promised himself at Ormonde's Quay was proving quite the reverse.

A dark flush overspread his face, and he clutched the arms of his chair.

"By heavens!" he cried, in a low voice of bitter passion, "this insolent hypocrite shall rue the day he made an enemy of me! I'll make him smart for't, I'll make him roar again. Never fear, P. T., but we'll have our revenge on him. But that" —here he leaned forward and waved his hand in the direction of Hetty, who was sitting at the foot of the couch,—"that's not what Stella here wants. No, she wants to play mistress at the Deanery, to hold her public days, and to strut swingingly up the Cathedral to the Dean's pew with Patrick carrying her prayer-book. She wants all the world to be making their curtseys to Madam Swift. Once she loved Presto, but now 'tis the world she loves."

The fact that there was a grain of truth in this accusation did not make it the less offensive to poor Hetty.

"I'll not talk with you when you are in this mood, sir," said she indignantly. "When have I said a word on which you can put this construction? This is some fit of madness on you."

Swift fell back in his chair, and his flush faded to a vivid pallor.

"Madness!" he groaned. "Ay, 'twas madness to believe a woman's word when she said she cared not whether the world knew of her marriage; she only cared to be my wife before God and the Church. Tell me, do you whisper your gossips the poor Dean's mad—mad?"

He was clasping his trembling hands across his eyes, endeavouring to calm his excitement. She had never before seen him lose his self-control, and her surprise almost overpowered her indignation. He was scrupulously temperate, but to-night he must surely have departed from his strict rule.

"Presto," she said, rising to her feet, "I don't know what you're

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talking about, and I fear you don't know yourself. Sure you have dined too well somewhere."

He was too proud to accept the accusation and too prudent to deny it, since it afforded an explanation for his unwonted outburst. He remained silent with his hand still over his eyes.

"Where did you dine, Presto?"

"Good night, P. P. T. I am not well. I am going home."

Hetty knew not whether she was pleased or sorry to conclude he had dined with Miss Vanhomrigh. She was apt, rightly or wrongly, to trace his unamiable moods to that pernicious influence. Now she considered she had a definite complaint to make against Miss Vanhomrigh, and before morning had turned most of her indignation into that channel.

As Swift walked along Ormonde's Quay in the direction of the Deanery, he struck the cobble-stones furiously with his stick. He was angry with himself and every one else.

"Confound women!" he muttered. "If I could begin life again, on my soul I'd never speak to one. P. P. T. is the best of them, but I was an ass when I gave her rights over me."

To acknowledge his marriage now, after all this while, was so difficult and would give rise to so much scandal, and as to taking a wife to live in his house and accommodating himself to a domestic life, it was more repugnant to him than ever. Above all there was his secret. Heaven forbid that it should be in the hands of two women! He sometimes wondered that he so little repented having confided it to Essie, though her impulsive temperament made her less likely to keep a secret than Hetty Johnson. He could not reasonably explain his greater confidence in her, but its source lay in his instinctive faith in her more supreme and perfect love for him. P. P. T. loved him as well as she knew how, as well as most people knew how, but Essie could love better than that. As he passed over the dark, dirty, hurrying Liffey, that was hastening to bear the refuse of the town to the sea, he almost wished himself a stick or a straw to be seized and borne away by the water, that came flowing swiftly down from the Bower, and swiftly past Ormonde's Quay; to be borne away and tossed out at length on the wide, fresh, lonely sea, far from, purified from all contact with humanity.

A kind of fair was being held in the long, narrow St. Nicolas Street that evening. It was at best a malodorous street, the lower stories of its crumbling houses open to the pavement and

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full of second-hand clothes and other wares. The feeble oil-lamps that swung over these established shops, were to-night reinforced by the flaring torches of itinerant vendors. In their fitful glare a crowd of dirty, ragged people pressed about from stall to stall, chattering, yelling, laughing over their bargains and their play. High above the torches and the confused movement of the street, and beyond its dark vanishing line of gables, the Cathedral spire stood silent, pointing up to the blue gulf of heaven, to the quiet stars.

With his eyes raised to this, the Dean pushed hastily on, bestowing as little attention as possible on the crowd, the "drove of Yahoos," as he called them to himself in bitter disgust; though he could not quite overlook certain elvish children, who boldly pulled at his gown, and women who called out a "Good night to you, your Riverence," or a "God bless you, Mr. Dane," as he passed.

No, he would not go to Delville to-morrow. He would let them suppose he had gone, but he would spend the day riding out along the strand; perhaps dine at Howth Castle, perhaps nowhere.

Next morning he awoke calmed and refreshed by sleep, but with the uncomfortable feeling of a child who has gone to bed naughty and unrepentant. He wrote an affectionate apologetic note to P. P. T., enquiring after her health, begging her not to trouble about that list she was to copy for him, and telling her he meant to be out of Dublin till the evening. Then he despatched some Cathedral business, mounted his horse and presently was cantering along the shore of the bay, meeting with delight the fresh breeze from the sea, that glittered and gloomed far out to the eastward under the changeful morning sky.

Chapter VI.

As soon as the Dean had left the book-room at Cellbridge and started on his homeward ride, Miss Stone, whom he had remorselessly snubbed, began to shake out the draggled feathers of her self-esteem and take her revenge. She had no intention of trampling on Esther's susceptibilities in the process; like most people who say unpardonable things, she simply never thought of her auditor except as an audience. The supreme necessity for her was to minister with words to her own vanity or resentment. She would have been amazed but, it is to be

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feared more offended than grieved, had she learned that she was generally considered malicious, and that wherever she went she left behind her rankling wounds.

"My dear Essie," she said, the roundness and prominence of her eyes becoming more marked than usual; "do you know, if I was you, I would not receive visits from single gentlemen without I had a lady here. 'Tis true you are not young, yet scarce old enough to live alone. Dr. Swift too is an elderly man—he shows his years now, though in London I remember he looked young for 'em—elderly, but *such* a man!"

"The Dean of St. Patrick's is a very old friend of mine, cousin, as you must be aware."

"Friend, my dear girl! Why 'tis generally admitted he treated you exceedingly ill, and sure we all admired your spirit in coming out here and avoiding his company, so soon as you found how matters stood."

"I came out here, cousin, when my principal law-business was settled and when I could afford to live here."

"Sure you don't mean to tell me you never heard of his amour with Mrs. Johnson? A very witty woman, and handsome still, they say, but of shocking low birth. However, 'tis said he has married her."

"His friends cannot suspect him of an intrigue and know nothing of a marriage. Methinks, Anna, you have too good a memory for stale scandals."

"Stale! Why, there's always something new about the Dean. Cousin Annesley's own woman that's sister to Mrs. Walls' maid —you'll acknowledge the Walls are friends of his—she says the Archdeacon and all the family are in a terrible taking because their new son-in-law from England threatens to shut the door in Mrs. Johnson's face, and speaks strongly against the Dean. But I hear that Dr. Delany—who's a great admirer of this Mrs. Johnson—a strange sort of woman to be having admirers at her age!—Delany more than hints she's Madam Swift, if the truth were known. And he's a friend now, an't he?"

"I am not acquainted with Dr. Delany," returned Essie shortly.

Indeed the good Delany, in his enthusiastic friendship for Mrs. Johnson, was a somewhat bitter partisan, and had avoided being introduced to one whom he believed to have been a source of grief to her, and whom he was willing to consider responsible for certain of his admired Dean's shortcomings.

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"If you have no advice to offer me except that I should attend to the tattle of servants and other common folk, and decline the visits of my oldest friend—why, cousin, you had better not waste breath on me," she added.

Anna had long pursued the project of becoming a regular inmate of cousin Vanhomrigh's house, for now Molly's keen eyes and mocking tongue were removed, it would be, she thought, very comfortable. It somewhat flurried her to perceive that she had irritated her cousin, whom she was used to pronounce of a phlegmatic disposition.

"Lord, Essie," she said, "don't be huffed! 'Tis a difficult matter for a young woman to live alone; but I must say I think you no worse off than when you had poor Molly. You always was much the more sober-minded and discreet of the two; I was your friend from the first, and frequently defended you when my mamma reflected on your reading, and would say 'twas better to be a bit of a reader than a giddy painted thing like your sister, poor creature—who was certainly heavily chastened in this life, and I hope has found peace in another."

"Cousin Anna," cried Essie, trembling with mingled feelings; "There was a time when I was in spirits enough to be diverted by such observations as yours. Ten years ago Moll and I were vastly diverted by the pleasant notion you and Sarah had got of making yourselves agreeable to a couple of sisters by backbiting one to the other. I remember Moll carrying the jest yet further, by praising you and Sarah to each other. For my part, even then, I sometimes found such manners too base and disgusting to laugh at 'em. But now, now when my heart's yet bleeding from the loss of my dear girl, you come and think to flatter me by your dull censure of her whose excellence was ever my joy and delight, of her I had the happiness to love. Why, 'tis not common decency. I have defended you too, Anna; I have often said you had more good nature than appeared, but I promise you I'll never say so again. I tell you plainly, I detest your conduct. Heavens, what a heart must you bear!"

And here the passion of tears, which she had stopped in mid course in the Bower, returned on her, and rushing from the room she left Miss Stone to her reflections—or rather her stupefaction. Anna had never heard such plain speaking as this since she parted from her own sister, and it is to be feared that Essie's speech, though plain, was less addressed to her particular faculties than Sarah's was wont to be. She really could not see

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what she had said that was so very dreadful. She had not alluded to the family scandal, though of course she had thought of it, for her mind was of the kind where such rubbish lies heaped, the most ancient and the newest jostling each other like Roman potsherds and Britannia metal teapots in the depths of a city river. Stupefaction having given way to indignation, and cousin Vanhomrigh not having re-appeared, she set forth to return on foot to the place whence she had come, where she could not resist telling the tale of her own discomfiture to ears not wholly sympathetic.

Meantime Essie, having locked both the parlour-doors, lay there face downwards on Molly's couch in a paroxysm of sobs, the physical convulsion of which made her almost unconscious of their cause, or rather causes. When it was over, she had promised herself solemnly on her knees to keep her promise to Molly, not only in the letter but in the spirit. She would insist on Cadenus telling her whether he was or was not married, or otherwise bound by ties nearer and dearer than he had acknowledged, to this Mrs. Johnson. If so, she would leave Ireland, and not endeavour to forget him—for that was impossible—but endeavour to allow him to forget her, which she was compelled to believe he would find only too easy. She was to spend the next day in Dublin on business connected with her property, and Francis was to accompany her. She would leave him later in the day when the Dean was likely to be at home, and go ask her plain momentous question.

The twilight was beginning to fall as Essie approached the Deanery on the day following the Dean's visit to Cellbridge. She might have reached it earlier, but on various pretexts she had put off her visit till the last possible moment. It had been her invariable custom to call there with due ceremony, having her old man-servant with her to announce her arrival by a pompous double knock at the great door. But the Dean had frequently let her out by his garden-door, and as this happened to be standing open, she went in by it, too intent on her purpose to consider whether so informal an entrance would meet with his approval. From the garden she could see some one writing in the window of the library. Candles were already lighted in the room, and against their flame she saw the silhouette of a woman's head, which certainly did not belong to Mrs. Brent the housekeeper. Her heart gave a great bound and then stood still; something told her that this was Mrs. Johnson. She

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stood for some minutes with her fascinated gaze fixed on the silhouette bowed over a great book and the quickly moving pen. Then turning round she was aware of some one else in the garden—a man in shirt-sleeves, digging potatoes. Patrick had been left this task by his master that morning, and had postponed it till now.

"Is the Dean within, Patrick?" she asked.

"No, madam, he's gone to Delville. I hope I see your la'ship in good health."

"Purely, I thank you. Who is the lady in the library?"

"Sure, 'tis Mrs. Johnson, madam." And having said this, Patrick scratched his head and was penetrated with regret at not having lied.

"I wish to pay her my respects. Will you announce me, Patrick?"

He gave a comical look at his earth-stained clothes and hands.

"Sure, madam, she'd be afther calling me a dirty divil for gladiatoring round with the quality widout a dacent coat to my back."

"No matter, I will announce myself," replied Miss Vanhomrigh, and turned impulsively towards the house; it struck her that it was perhaps all the better that she should appear alone.

Hetty Johnson, with that native philosophy which had justly endeared her to her friend, had easily made up her mind to pass over the unpleasant incident of the preceding evening. This philosophy of hers perhaps owed something to the fact that Madam P. P. T. in spite of her ailments, was an excellent sleeper. A good eight hours' sleep usually does its work in smoothing out the ruffled mind as thoroughly as a good high tide, that smoothes out the teased and trampled sands of a watering-place, leaving there fresh stores of shining seaweed and wet shells for the children to gather. In token that she bore no malice against her friend, she had come to copy into his ledger his list of the poor people who were to receive badges, entitling them to beg within the Liberties, whence other beggars were henceforth to be excluded. A task which would be the more obviously a labour of love, because the Dean knew that P. P. T. shrugged her graceful shoulders at this new-fangled arrangement, as at one of poor dear Presto's many odd fancies, which one must indulge because they were his. She had even said that had she lived within the Liberties, she would, upon her word, have laughed at his rules, and been a

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free-trader in beggars; for sure the poor wretches had all a right to get what they could, and she would not herself be near so charitable were it not for the number and the divertingness of the Dublin beggars. His official beggars would soon become as dull as beadles, and charm not a groat out of any one's pocket.

So P. P. T. smiled at her own virtue, with a half-humorous and quite unpharisaical pleasure therein, as she finished her copy and wrote beneath it the date, and "Jonathan Swift," in a hand which other people might think his, but which he would know. As she was forming the big "J" there came a knock at the door. She said "Come in," without raising her eyes, feeling sure it would be only Dingley or Mrs. Brent. The person came in, but did not advance into the room. When she had finishing writing "Jonathan Swift," she looked up and saw the person standing by the door—a lady very tall and pale in the dim light, and her long straight mourning cloak. The hood had half fallen back from her fair head, and her large dilated eyes were fixed on Mrs. Johnson with a strange, intent look that was almost beseeching in its anxiety.

"Mrs. Johnson—I have the honour to address?" she asked in a low voice, harmonious but somewhat tremulous.

Mrs. Johnson, whose mind moved quickly, did not waste much time on astonishment. She stood up under arms almost immediately.

"Your servant, madam," she replied, holding her head up proudly on her long neck, and returning the intruder's look with one more cold and keen. "Your visit is doubtless to the Dean. He is abroad, and is not expected home till late."

"It was meant for him, yet, madam, I'd as lief it were to you," returned Miss Vanhomrigh, nervously grasping her own cloak.

"Pray, madam, be seated," said Mrs. Johnson, determined not to be justly accused of ill-breeding. "May I enquire the name of her who honours me with a visit?'

"Forgive me, madam, if I do not answer that question," replied Essie, her voice still tremulous. "Who I am matters not, so you will but believe my intentions are honest, as indeed madam, they are."

Mrs. Johnson bowed with a little look of disdain that passed unnoticed. Miss Vanhomrigh might not know her by sight, but she knew Miss Vanhomrigh; Dingley had once pointed out the

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young lady from Mrs. Stoyte's parlour window, and after that she had passed her once or twice in the streets of Dublin, and each time with a thrill of pain and repulsion that surprised herself. She had seen the visitor approaching the house, but owing to the gathering dusk and her bad eyesight had concluded her to be a friend of Mrs. Brent's. But now she had no doubt who it was. Did the discreet Presto encourage Miss Vanhomrigh to enter his house thus, by a back way, alone and unannounced? —Surely not.

Miss Vanhomrigh seated herself on a hard sofa, and Mrs. Johnson on a chair at a little distance. So these two women, who had for ten years played so dire a part in each other's lives, met for the first time face to face. They could not but look at each other with painful interest. Esther saw before her a woman who had reached middle life, with a face still handsome enough, but cold and hard; not that face bright with sparkling gaiety or sly humour or cheerful benevolence, with which Hetty Johnson charmed her social circle. There was a sense in which the look Mrs. Johnson wore at that moment was encouraging to her rival, for it lent a new probability to Swift's assertion that he had been only like an elder brother to her, and that she was jealous over him, as sisters sometimes are over brothers. Essie on the contrary, in the flush and simplicity of her emotion, looked unusually pretty, soft and girlish.

"What have you to say to me, madam?" asked Mrs. Johnson, with an icy calm that was not assumed; for a deep and bitter coldness seemed to rise from some hidden depths in her heart and freeze her whole nature, as she looked at this young woman, who, it seemed to her, had striven in the insolence of youth, wealth and position to rob another, one older and less fortunately situated, of her only treasure; and for a time had succeeded, and thereby for ever lessened the treasure's worth.

"I know not," returned Essie, forgetful of forms, of all except the fulfilment of her purpose. "That is, I know what I would say. Mrs. Johnson, you are a very old friend, almost a sister to the Dean, are you not?"

"I am no sister nor otherwise related to him, madam," answered Hetty, wilfully misunderstanding the question. "But, as is well known to his friends, he has been my kind protector and closest friend from my childhood till now."

"Then you must be well acquainted with his humour," returned Essie, "and aware 'tis a singular one. Oh, do not

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mistake me," she added quickly, as Hetty looked up with a slight frown; "I know, and—— Heavens! how do I honour his great, his generous disposition. Was never, sure, a heart so tender to his friend, so kind to the unfortunate, so staunch to every cause that he deems just and true. No, no! I do not speak in dispraise of him."

A faint flush came to Mrs. Johnson's marble cheek, and her soft dark eyes glowed under their black brows. Irritable and sarcastic as she constantly was, she did not know the sensation of violent anger, of a passion that swelled the veins and made hot unmeasured words rush from the throbbing brain to the tongue. No doubt as a little child she had experienced it, but never as a mature woman. Now such anger rose within her, as Miss Vanhomrigh praised her own husband to her. But she controlled it.

"Madam," she said with studied calm, "I'll not affect to be made very proud by your commendations of the Dean, for you say but what his old friends have been saying these thirty or forty years. Yet 'tis perhaps as well I am here to listen to it rather than he, for though a divine, he is human, and the praises of so fine a young lady might make him vain."

Essie absorbed in the difficulty of coming to her point continued; "I praise him only because I cannot refrain from doing it—only because I hate to be forced to suspect a fault in him, and that fault—a want of candour. Madam, it seems you have known him well since he was a young man, tell me—on my honour I do not ask it idly—would he be likely to keep from you, from another, a secret that it would have been wiser, more just to tell them? I hate to think it possible, indeed I do."

"Madam," returned Mrs. Johnson, her voice trembling with anger, "excuse me, I am but a poor country-bred creature. It may be polite breeding would compel me to answer a question that to my simplicity appears exceedingly strange, seeing that the Dean is, as you must be aware, my most valued friend and benefactor. Well, I make no pretentions to be a fine lady, and am therefore free to say I would not discuss the Dean's faults, whether real or fancied, with my oldest acquaintance, much less with a complete stranger like yourself."

"Oh, for God's sake!" cried Essie, in too deadly earnest to admit offence, "do hear me. As you are a Christian woman, madam, restrain your anger—I cannot think 'tis just—and listen

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to what I have to say. Pray do. It does concern you, though you may not think it."

Mrs. Johnson, impressed by the appeal, and ashamed of her passion, stood irresolute. She felt no fatal curiosity to hear the truth about Swift's relations to her rival, but on the contrary, shrank from confidences that might be painful and could have no practical result. Perhaps the chief reason why it roused her wrath to hear Miss Vanhomrigh boldly accuse him of want of candour, was because that was a trait in his character which she had been at pains to hide from herself, to explain away, since it had forced itself on her attention nine years ago. But Hetty Johnson was a good woman. Miss Vanhomrigh's manner of entrance and her immediate plunge into a subject of great delicacy, had naturally both startled and shocked her; yet to give way to passion, to trample rudely on one who stood before her as a suppliant, though that one had wronged her, this Hetty could not do. Besides there was something compelling in Esther's intensity of purpose.

"Madam," she said, speaking once more with composure, "you bid me as I am a Christian hear what you have to say. I am no enthusiast, yet Christian is a name I value, and I trust you do too, and that you do not make use of it for any vain or malicious purpose. But since my patience is of the shortest, and my friend Mrs. Dingley may at any moment join us, I beg you'll be brief. Sure, 'twere childish to make so much ado about such a question as you have asked. Be plain. How does the Dean want candour?"

Essie raised her eyes, fixed them on Mrs. Johnson and seemed about to speak, yet said nothing.

"What secret do you imagine he has to keep?" asked Hetty, with the impatience of pain.

Essie clasped her hands tightly together, and at length spoke falteringly and by a great effort.

"Most likely he has none—but I came hither to-day to ask him whether 'tis true what people say; whether he is a married man, or in any way bound—not free."

"Ah!" cried Hetty, and there was a pause. Then—"By what right, madam, would you have ventured to ask him such a question?"

"Tell me, tell me, can you answer it?" cried Essie.

"You have said it—I insist on learning your right, your motive before I answer," returned Hetty quickly.

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"Madam," cried Essie, "I have no right—none that he would acknowledge, yet you will understand my motive, for you are a woman too! Give me a moment, and I will try to make it clear to you."

Leaning with one arm over the sofa and her handkerchief pressed to her lips she paused, looking not at Mrs. Johnson, but away into the deepening twilight of the room; and so after an uninterrupted silence she went on, but still intermittently—

"I have a friend, a kinswoman—I'll not tell you her name. When she was but sixteen years old the Dean took note of her; he commended her wit, and she had wit enough to be very proud of his praise. Years after that when he was in London—ah, you Dublin folk don't know yet how they sought after him in London!—he made a pastime of enlightening her folly, of teaching her to reason and distinguish. He that had the greatest and wittiest in the kingdom for his intimates, he condescended to be friends with her. Madam, you know him, gifted with what a happy genius, how charming in his benevolence to those he loves, how various in—well, well, you know!"

Mrs. Johnson had stiffened in her chair as these praises of Swift came out slowly, and ended with a sigh.

"'Tis enough—'twas but natural," Essie resumed with an effort, her voice deepening and steadying, "that she should love him. She loved him, madam. She loves him still. Yes, you can easily imagine, she loves him still; for what wretched pigmies must the common run of men look beside that image that she perpetually carries in her mind!"

"And Dr. Swift? Has he returned her passion?"

Mrs. Johnson spoke with unnatural calm. She had been listening to Miss Vanhomrigh with part of her attention, but as she listened new and painful thoughts had passed through her mind. How if she had made a mistake in allowing her whole life to be strictly bounded by Swift's rules, and meantime another woman had trampled on them, rushed in and taken the kingdom for her own? It was terrible to await the answer to this question, and terrible also to be compelled to give it; for there was not even a plain truth to fall back upon. Pride, her own ever-sanguine thoughts, and the growing doubt whether this icy woman opposite her could ever have loved even Swift, made an affirmative tremble upon Essie's lips. But was it true? Would *he* admit it had ever been so? No; he would be angry at the

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imputation. And she had come hither scarcely at all for her own sake, but that she might at length behave with justice towards this woman, of whose position she had for years thought more than she had chosen to admit even to Molly, to whom she was now prepared to yield even her heart's blood. The struggle was short, but sharp.

Then—"No," she said faintly.

Mrs. Johnson, who had leaned back in her chair, sat up again, and spoke after a pause.

"Then, madam, 'tis plain that, whether the Dean be married or single, this young lady should abandon at once her—her unfortunate passion."

A harder word had risen to her lips, but she suppressed it. Like many just people, who have little to forgive themselves, Mrs. Johnson found it difficult to be generous, but she wished to be so.

"'Tis useless to persuade her," returned Essie, her head bowed and her eyes fixed on her own tightly-clasped hands. 'Nothing can do 't except the knowledge that he is bound to another by some tie of love and honour superior to the tender friendship"—the phrase pricked Hetty like a pin, for she knew it—"that he has often avowed for her. Is he so bound? Oh, madam, pray do answer me freely, for, though I honour marriage, I am not so much the slave of the world's opinion as to regard no other tie between man and woman as deserving of consideration. Tell me, I implore you!"

She raised her eyes to Mrs. Johnson's, who met them with a white stern face and an imperious gesture that commanded her to pause. Presto had P. P. T.'s word of honour that the fact of their marriage should never be hinted at. He had suggested last night that worldly motives were making her repent that promise. She would show him that at any rate she knew how to keep it.

"Madam," she said deliberately, "I know not what you would hint. The Dean is not a man to form any unlawful tie—you might have guessed as much. As to love, to the best of my belief—and you'll remember that I am his oldest friend—he has never once entertained that passion, not even at the age when few have the discretion to avoid it. The chief part of your question seems to be whether he is married. I can but say he has never told me so; but, on the contrary, often talked against marriage, especially the marriage of men advancing in

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years. I have answered you, madam, as well as I am able, and beg you'll excuse me. 'Tis full time I returned to my lodgings."

"You have concealed nothing from me? Are you sure you have told me everything?" asked Essie earnestly, rising from the sofa.

Hetty rose too.

"I have answered you, madam, to the utmost of my power and my short patience. I heard a friend who is to walk home with me come into the house just now; you really must excuse me. Will you wait the Dean here?"

"No, no!" cried Essie, terrified. "Farewell, madam. I thank you for your patience, and ask your pardon for my singular conduct, which may well seem unpardonable."

She sighed, and drew her hood forward. Both ladies curtseyed, and Miss Vanhomrigh left the room, leaving the door wide open in her haste.

Hetty did not immediately follow her; she sat down again. She seemed to have been sitting stone still for a long time, and certainly must have been so for several minutes, when a voice called her, low but clear.

"Mrs. Johnson."

Surely that woman was not still there; yet it was her voice. Hetty did not immediately reply.

"Mrs. Johnson," it came again, louder and more insistent.

Hetty walked slowly and reluctantly to the open door. Yes, Miss Vanhomrigh was still there. She stood just under the large lantern that hung in the middle of the square hall, with its handsome paving of great black and white marble slabs. Her face was very pale, paler than it had been before, and the lantern cast the shadow of her hood across her eyes. It made them look almost black, yet they gleamed out of the shadow.

"Mrs. Johnson," she repeated. Hetty moved a little nearer, yet not much beyond the lintel of the door.

"Listen," she said, and her voice though not loud was very clear, and had a strength and ring of command in it that Hetty had not heard before; "I am myself that woman, that most unhappy woman I spoke of. I appeal to you before God, as you hope for mercy, have mercy on me and on yourself! Tell me the truth. Are you married to Dr. Swift?"

Mrs. Johnson stood up white, transformed to stone, but with her eyes fronting that piercing gaze opposite, that seemed as though it would tear the heart out of her bosom. At length she

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spoke and was aware that a little tremor ran through her, but her enunciation was clear, haughty, deliberate.

"No, madam, I am not. You have asked too much. Go! Leave this house!" and she pointed to the door, which was open, as though her strange visitor had once already gone out. Then the black figure vanished silently again into the outer dusk, this time to return no more.

Yet even before it had gone, Hetty had turned her back on it. Never, never before in all her life, in which reason had ever controlled emotion, had she experienced or imagined such a struggle as that which had but now torn her bosom. She trembled and stretched out her hands for support, as though she had received a blow, and so going blindly back into the dim library found herself suddenly yet gently, caught and supported in a man's arms.

"Dear, dearest P. P. T.," whispered Swift's voice close to her ear. "'Twas worthy, 'twas noble. Madwoman! How durst she come here? Ah, I thought you would not lie, you that hate a lie! And then I heard you do 't—and all for Presto's sake. Dear, brave P. P. T. How can he ever be sorry enough?"

"Let me go," she said faintly; "I am not well. Let me sit down." Then—"How did you come here?"

He seated himself on the sofa, and took her irresponsive hand.

"When I came in, Mrs. Brent told me there was some one with you in the library; so I went in there," pointing to a door communicating with the dining-parlour. "But I heard nothing, so presently I opened the door softly and stole in. That was how it happened. I never meant to spy on P. T., or that moon-struck creature either. Heaven knows how she came hither; 'twas not at my invitation. But I am very glad I heard P. P. T. tell her brave lie; else she would have kept the thing a secret, and never have allowed P. D. F. R. to know all her loyalty and goodness to him."

"Pray let Patrick order a coach," said Hetty; "I am not well. I wish to go to my lodgings."

"Poor dear Dallah! Let me go with you."

"No, no. Why should you? Dingley must be here somewhere. Pray call Patrick!"

And hurrying to the door again, Mrs. Johnson called out in a shrill, fretful voice, "Dingley, Dingley!" Dingley answered

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from the distance, and Swift coming meekly forth, shouted to Patrick in an opposite direction.

"You won't let me come?" he asked.

"You are very good to offer it; but Dingley will take care of me."

"May I come to supper?"

"Faith, if you choose to sup with Dingley and eat her tripe. I am sick, and going to bed."

"May I come in the morning?" he asked almost timidly.

"I thought, Presto, 'twas our rule not to meet of a morning. I see no reason why you should come before dinner. Mr. Ford has sent us a hare, so you had best dine with us to-morrow."

"Dear, poor P. T.!" he said in a whisper, standing close to her, and looking down at her inscrutable face with wistful eyes; "she thinks it was my fault. It was not indeed—as I hope to be saved, it was none of Presto's fault."

"Don't!" she cried, with a quick look of pain. "Why will you talk about it? Let us forget it as soon as we can. Ah, here's Dingley! D. D., I am sick—we must ride home."

Dingley was voluble in finding reasons for Hetty's sickness, which ranged from the bit of lobster she had eaten last week to the magpie they had seen in the Phœnix Park that afternoon. Having satisfied herself that the cause was found, her anxiety was allayed. Patrick had caught a coach close by, and the Dean helped the ladies in, vainly trying to win a glance from P. P. T.'s averted eyes. When the coach had driven off he went back to the library, and finding his big ledger open, where Hetty had been copying his list, he shut it to with a mighty bang; and as it banged, he cursed Miss Essie aloud.

(*To be concluded.*)

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THE FIRST ENGLISH FREE LIBRARY AND ITS FOUNDERS.

IF, as Cicero says, a library be the soul of a house, a public library is the soul of a city. It has been usually assumed that free public libraries are a modern institution, and that our unscholarly forefathers were without such sources of enlightenment. Possibly to a large extent they were so. "Our forefathers," declares Jack Cade, "had no book but the score and the tally;" and he unjustly charges Lord Say with the iniquity of causing printing to be used, besides traitorously corrupting the youth of the realm by the erection of a grammar-school. "Moreover," he continues, addressing the same nobleman, "it shall be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian can endure to hear."

Though there were nouns and verbs in Lord Say's time, Jack Cade's head had been mounted on London Bridge (A.D. 1450) a quarter of a century before Caxton had inserted them in the 'Dictes and notable wyse sayings of the Phylosophers,' the first book (A.D. 1477) printed in England. Perhaps even in Cade's time there were as many books as students, for though, as we shall see, there was at least one free library at this far back dàte, the books were not taken home to read, but were sources whence instruction was afforded by the ecclesiastical librarian to those eager for his teaching. At present, if all men are not born thinkers they are born readers, and a book is the best substitute for a mind. "It is the precious life-blood of a master spirit," says Milton, and in keeping with this bold figure we have heard it averred by an enthusiastic librarian that next in importance to the circulation of the blood is the circulation of books, the latter process being as needful for the intellectual life as the former for the physical.

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Now, we know the name of the discoverer of the courses of the arterial fluid, but who was the originator of the first lending-library, or rather, who established the first free library in England has scarcely been a matter of literary curiosity. Forests of free public libraries are spreading over the land, the leaves of whose volumes are as innumerable as the leafage of the summer woods, and many of them as evanescent; but who planted the parent tree, even the oracle of all things, the latest edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' fails, at least with historical accuracy, to explain.

Beckman, who in his 'History of Inventions' has touched upon everything else, from cock-fighting to cataloguing, has not dealt with the subject of free libraries, which of course more or less existed before they came under the "Act." Isaac D'Israeli in his 'Curiosities of Literature' has made the like omission, though the question seems quite within his sphere. With regard to the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' (9th edition) we therein read under the article "Libraries" that the fine old library instituted by Humphrey Chetham in Manchester, in 1653, and which is still "housed in the old collegiate buildings where Raleigh was once entertained by Dr. Dee, might be said to be the first free library" in England.

Two centuries, however, before worthy Chetham had erected his free fountain of knowledge for thirsty souls, a grave fraternity known as the Guild of Kalendars had established a free library, for all comers, in connection with a church yet standing in one of the thoroughfares of Old Bristol. Kalendars, as a name, are more familiar to readers by the lying tales which Agib and others of his tribe of roving dervishes told to Haroun Alraschid, than by the mediæval bibliophiles of whom we speak. The latter were, however, so far similar to their Oriental namesakes that they were severed like them from parents, wife and children, relations and possessions, and were devoted to a religious life, though they did not wander about like the artful Arabians to live upon the bounty of those whom they made their dupes.

William Wyrcestre, the father of English antiquaries, a native of Bristol, writing about 1478, says that the foundation of the guild was authorised in A.D. 700 by the seal of Wolstan, Bishop of Worcester; but as we have no historical mention of Bristol itself being a settlement at so early a date, there may be some doubt cast upon the ancient manuscript whence Wyrcestre professes to have derived his statement. John Leland (*temp.*

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Henry VIII.) speaks of the Kalendars as an established body about the year 1170; and when in 1216 Henry III. held a Parliament in Bristol, the deeds of the guild were inspected, and ratified on account of the antiquity and high character of the fraternity ("propter antiquitates et bonitates in eâ Gilda repertas") and Gualo, the Papal Legate, commended the Kalendars to the care of William de Blois, Bishop of Worcester, within whose diocese Bristol then lay. It was the office of the Kalendars to record local events and such general affairs as were thought worthy of commemoration, whence their name. They consisted of clergy and laity, even women being admitted to their Order.

There is a curious volume, the original manuscript of which yet exists in the Town Chamber of Bristol, written by Robart Ricart, one of the Kalendar Brotherhood, and Town Clerk of Bristol in the time of Edward IV., which volume has been edited by Miss Lucy Toulmin Smith for the Camden Society. In the general oath of the Mayor on taking office as given by Ricart, that worshipful chief magistrate, after declaring his intention to do his "entire pain and diligence to put away, cease and destroy, all manner (of) heresies and errors, cleped openly lollardries," within his "bailly, from time to time" with all his power, makes special profession of his intention to "be helping, supporting and favouring to the Prior and his brethren the priests of the house of Kalendars of Bristowe, in all things (he says) that I may lawfully and honestly do of right, as her very patron, to the confirmation and defence of the rents, lands and tenements of the same house; saving every man's right." This shows how important a body the Kalendars, locally, were in the centuries of their existence; but they are now as completely gone as their namesakes of Bagdad.

Happily for the antiquary, however, the old Church of the Kalendars yet substantially exists; but it is so outwardly transformed, with its Italian campanile of the last century for the earlier Gothic tower, that the cloistral brotherhood, could they revisit their former scenes, might pass it by unrecognized. Looking curiously within the western doorway, should they fortunately find it unlocked, they might indeed see some features with which they had been familiar. During seven centuries four short stout piers with cushion capitals of the Norman patterns have stood and yet stand erect, two on either side of the entrance of the nave. The two on the north side formerly helped to

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support a chamber which contained the library of the brethren, and the two to the south the house of the prior, which yet exists in modernised form. The church is situated opposite the present Council House, and close to the Exchange, a building which superseded what was locally known as the Tolsey, a covered portico open to the street but reared against the north aisle of the same church, with the roof running beneath the clerestory windows. Here the old merchant princes negotiated their sales, and like Salarino on the Rialto, the adventurous traders who discussed their projects and recounted events might in glancing at the sacred walls beside them have had their thoughts wafted away in boisterous weather to their reeling vessels freighted with costly argosies on the traitorous deep. This is the "Tolesell" which has been commemorated in Sir Walter Scott's 'Pirate,' where we are told old Clem Cleveland of College Green, Bristol, was father of the Captain of the *Good Hope* of that city, and was "well known on the Tolesell." So the son tells Mordaunt, when speaking of the fine luck his vessel had on the Spanish main, both with commerce and privateering. But our present interest is with the library which was storied above the Tolsey at the north-west end of Al Hallowen or All Saints Church. Exclusive of the Tolsey at the basement of the north aisle, the entire building comprised a parish church, which included the chapel of the Kalendars, with the college and library of the same body, and the house of their prior, from an inner apartment of which latter a secret view of the interior of the church is yet obtained. Judging from the Italian cupola as seen from the street, the church might have been erected in the last century; but the windows of the north aisle indicate the style of that portion to date as far back as the 15th century, while the circular piers of the interior already mentioned are about three centuries earlier still. Opening from the depressed narthex, as it might be called, formed by these piers with their superstructure, is a 15th-century building of loftier elevation, with light clustered columns, pointed arches and broad windows of Perpendicular tracery. Of late years the walls and roof have been damasked with fanciful colouring in supposed revival of the mediæval appearance of the sacred place. But the exuberant ecclesiastical life of olden days as recorded in the vestry archives is in curious contrast with present deadness within the walls. According to modern notions, or at least practice, overmuch devotion is as unwholesome to the soul as excess of food to the physical system; and closed doors of churches are more

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sulted to temperate habits of worship than open ones. Such continual prayer and praise were no doubt

> "More fitted for the cloudy night
> Of Popery than Gospel light."

It was ordered by Wolstan, Bishop of Worcester, who in visitation of this part of his diocese, July 10, 1340, examined the ancient rules of the College, that a prior in priest's orders should be chosen by the majority of the chaplains and lay brethren, without the solemnity of confirmation, consecration or benediction of superiors, and eight chaplains who were not bound by monastic rules, were to be joined with him to celebrate for departed brethren and benefactors every day. By an ordinance of John Carpenter, Bishop of Worcester, A.D. 1464, the Prior was to reside in the college, and take charge of a certain library newly erected at the Bishop's expense, so that every festival day from seven to eleven in the forenoon admission should be freely allowed to all desirous of consulting the Prior, to read a public lecture every week in the library, and elucidate obscure places of Scripture as well as he could to those desirous of his teachings. This fact helps to refute the popular superstition that piety was first invented at the Reformation, and that Luther was the first religious man ; inasmuch as it supplies evidence against the evangelical belief that the Bible was a lightly valued book in old days, and restrained from the knowledge of the community. Lest, through negligence or accident, the books should be lost, it was ordered that three catalogues of them should be kept; one to remain with the Dean of Augustinian Canons, whose 14th-century church is now Bristol Cathedral, another with the Mayor for the time being, and the third with the Prior himself. Unfortunately, they are all three lost. The Bishop also enjoined that there should be a due collation of all the books with the catalogues by the Dean, the Prior, and another appointed by the Mayor, between the feast of St. Michael and of All Saints ; and if it should happen that through the neglect of the Prior some book should be carried out of the library, or in any way alienated or stolen, the Prior was to be answerable for the book under a penalty of forty shillings above its actual value ; and if he were unable to restore the book, then he was to pay its value and forty shillings in addition, twenty shillings to the Mayor and the rest in provision of chains for the books, or otherwise for the benefit of the library. To the Prior, for his attention to the library was to be paid annually by the Kalendars' guild

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ten pounds in quarterly portions. If the Prior absent himself from his duties for some honest cause, he was to declare the reason, to be approved or not by the Bishop or the Mayor, so that he be not absent more than a month altogether in the year, unless for some urgent cause to be accepted as sufficient by the Bishop or the Mayor; and then in his absence the senior brother would have the keeping of the library. At his institution the Prior was to swear obedience to the requirements of his office, and no prior was ever to obtain release from the ordinances he had sworn to observe, under penalty of privation. This form of installation was signed by John Harlowe, prior, and John Shipward, mayor, in expression of their consent.

It may therefore be concluded that as early as A.D. 1464 a library was established in Bristol, to which free access was granted to the townsmen, and that to increase its usefulness, free lectures were delivered within its walls.

It was in this year of the evil days of King Henry VI. that his heroic Queen once more headed her army, and, returning from Scotland, was again joined by Somerset and the Percies, only to be again routed by the victorious Edward of the White Rose, to meet whom she had marched. But the Kalendar Prior, in his cloistral book-room, calmly turned the leaves of his fair-penned volumes, undisturbed by civil and domestic treason; only the footsteps now and then, and the voice of some earnest seeker after knowledge breaking upon his quietude. It was but old-fashioned scholarship that he taught; he showed the paths the saints had trod; and cared little for the philosophers of the earth, the education of the heart being more regarded than that of the intellect and senses.

Among the Church muniments is a venerable tome in the handwriting of the brotherhood themselves, which gives so curious a picture of the ecclesiastical regulations and workings of a religious guild of the 15th century, that a few extracts from it in illustration of the internal life of the Kalendars may be worth attention. Records of benefactors to the church are prominent among the entries, the homely old Saxon phrase of "good-doers" being assigned to those whose bounty to the fraternity had earned them a place in the memorial. All Hallowtide was the season for calling men's good deeds to remembrance, the invocation of blessings on the "sowles" of such being contrasted with the equally devout, though not less interested supplication, that those whose generosity towards the Church had been

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defective, or whose actions, on account of some imputed wrong to the Church, did not smell sweet and blossom in the dust, or in the field of this life, might find place for repentance; the burden of the aspiration in their case being "God amende" them. In the persons of good-doers the priors of the community and the vicars of All Saints, who were generally elected from the priors, are conspicuous for their liberal gifts or beneficial deeds. "Where it hath been of a laudable custom of long continuance used," announces the solemn priest in the "General Mynde," or yearly commemoration, "that on this day, that is to say, the Sunday before Ash Wenesday (Ax Wensday) the names of good doers and well willers by whom tenements, buildings, jewels, books, chalices, vastments, and what divers other ornaments and goods as followeth hath been given unto the Church unto the honour and worship of Almighty God, and increasing of divine service, to be rehearsed and showed yearly unto you by name be they man or woman: and what benefits they did for themselves and for their friends and for others by their lifetimes, and what they left for them to be done after their days that they shall not be forgotten, but be had in remembrance and be prayed for of all the parish that be now, and of all them that be to come, and also for an example to all ye that be now living that ye may likewise to do for yourselves and for your friends while ye be in this world that after this transitory life ye may be had in the number of good-doers rehearsed by name, and in the special prayers of Christian people in time coming, that by the infinite mercy of Allmighty God, by the intercession of our blessed Lady and of all blessed saints of heaven, in whose honour and worship this church is dedicate, ye may come to your everlasting bliss and the joy that our blessed Lord hath redeemed you unto. Amen."

A long list of the good doers, intermixed with others whose doings were not good, then follows, headed by Robert the Girdler. Under the date 1488 we find:—

"In primis he (Roger the Girdler) gave unto the said Church unto the worship of the precious and glorious sacrament to be borne in a cup of silver gilt within and without, with a cover and a crucifix on the head, with precious stones worshipfully endued, and one little cup and one spoon: both ygilt, weighing XLV ounces. And that this said cup, cup and spoon be not aliened, sold, nor yet broken under pain of cursing as it appeareth by writing under the Dean's seal. God have mercy on his sowle, Amen."

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Alice Chester, also, was deservedly held in remembrance for her good works. She caused to be made a carved tabernacle with a "Trinity" in the middle over the image of Jesus, and "on her own cost let gild it full worshipfully with a cloth hanging before to be drawn at certain times, when it shall please the vicar and the paryshons."

"Moreover the said Alice two years before her decease, being in good prosperity and health of body, considering the rood-loft of this church was nothing of beauty, she taking to her council the worshipful of this parish, with others having best understanding and rights in carving, to the honour and worship of Almighty God and His saints, and of her special devotion unto this church, hath let to be made a new rood-loft in carved work, fulfilled with XXII images, on her own proper cost, of the which images be a Trinity in the middle, and Christopher in the north side and a Michael in the south side; and beside is the two pillars bearing up the loft, every one having four houses set on carve work, within every house an image."

These were glorious days of Church building. The majestic fane of St. Mary Redcliff had just added a new dignity to Gothic architecture, and the noble tower of St. Stephen's, which still lifts its regal head a few paces from All Saints, was about to be commenced. Also Sir John Gyllard, Prior of the Kalendaries ("Sir," it should be remembered, was in old days a clerical as well as a knightly prefix), who died in 1451, spent the large sum of £227 in building anew the Chapel of St. Mary in the north or Jesus aisle of his church, "worshipfully" glazing the same aisle with the story of *Te Deum Laudamus*. He also constructed a large room "over the said chapel of Our Lady, for an easement unto the Prior and his brethren." This incorporated the Library.

Another notable benefactor was William Wytheney, who had "let, ordeyn, and let made at his own cost a memorial that every man should remember his own death, that is to say, the Dawnse of Powlys, the which cost XVIII£. God have mercy on his sowle. Amen." It seems uncertain what was the character of this *Dance of Paul's*; it could hardly have been a book, for it appears to have been suspended and unrolled twice a year, so that it may be inferred to have been a large picture or piece of tapestry of the *Dance of Death* school of religious art. The fraternity were, however, rich in illuminated books, one of which, a rarely beautiful *Primer*, which was given by the same worthy to whom they

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were indebted the *Dance of Paul's.* This was so precious a volume that for security it was kept within a grating under Saint Christopher's image in the rood-loft. In defiance of Christopher and his saintly protection, the book was stolen, the robbers proving to be some pilgrims who, previously to their setting out to the shrine of St. James at Compostella, had thus cheaply provided themselves with an offering worthy of his spiritual excellence. The precious primer was traced and brought back. Once more it was enclosed within a grating, but was again stolen, and never after recovered.

The vestry book whence our extracts are taken was written by the hand of Sir Maurice Hardwick, who was vicar in 1455, "for to put in the names of the good doers and the names of the wardens of the Church, and what good they did in their days, that they may yearly be prayed for."

This interesting library was destroyed by fire in 1466 through the carelessness of a drunken "point-maker," two adjoining houses against the steeple of the church being at the same time burnt down. It may be of interest to observe that William Rowley, a name made famous by Chatterton, was one of the wardens in that year. He died in 1488.

On the Feast of All Saints it was customary for the Mayor and Councilmen to pay their devotions at the church we are speaking of. On that day, after dinner, says the old Kalendar brother, Ricart, the Town Clerk, who no doubt would be of the company, these civic dignitaries assembled at the Tolsey, and "with many other gentils and worshipful commoners, such as appereth there at that time, from thence passed into All Hallowen Church, there to offer." They then walked "unto the mayor's place, there to have their fires and their drinkings with spiced cake-bread and sundry wines, the cups merrily serving about the house, and then from thence every man departing unto his parish church to evensong."

JOHN TAYLOR.

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THE ROMANCE OF MARY MACADAM.

PART I.

BY EDWARD A. ARNOLD.

[IN a famous Peerage Case that was decided not many years ago, the successful petitioner based his claim upon descent from a certain Captain M——, an officer in the British army, who died in America towards the close of the eighteenth century. The case hung upon the legitimacy of Captain M——'s children, and it was with the utmost difficulty that sufficient evidence was compiled from the scanty records of the time, to prove the fact of his marriage with Miss Mary MacAdam. Although considerable interest attached to her romantic story, only a bare outline of her life could be traced at the trial; but if the curious manuscript, (purporting to be a record or journal penned by the lady herself,) which has fallen into the hands of the present writer, had then been accessible, it would have afforded a singular confirmation of the petitioner's case.

In the task of deciphering and preparing the MS. for publication it has been impossible to avoid a medley of archaic and modern terms of expression, which, it is feared, may detract to some extent from the freshness of the original; but for this the compiler must plead his own inexperience, and he can only hope that the interest of the narrative may cover any deficiency in dealing with it.—E. A. A.]

I.

HAVE I never shown you where Tuthill's Farm lies, yonder across Hudson, in the forest-clearing by the ferry? It seems but yesterday (though 'tis nigh twenty years ago!) that I was running down to the shore there, a girl of ten, to meet my father on his passage from the city. He used to give lessons in Fence to the English officers of the garrison; his skill in the art was noted, and all were eager to learn from Colonel McAdam. They called him "Chieftain," for it was no secret that if the King enjoyed his own again, my father, instead of retiring to the Colonies, would have remained in Scotland to head his clan in peace, as he had bravely led them in the van at Culloden.

At the time of our flight I was a mere baby, and in later years I could rarely persuade my father to speak of that terrible time. "You will have troubles of your own to think about soon

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enough," he used to say; and God knows how true his words proved! but even now a shudder comes over me as I fancy him returning from the battle which ruined his fortunes, only to be greeted with the news of his wife's death, and to find sorrow and desolation reigning in the house.

Utterly careless of his own safety, and roused with difficulty from an agony of grief, he was at length induced by the interposition of friends to fly the country ere it was too late, and, taking me with him, to embark on a Dundee whaler, whose captain agreed to steer for the Sound of New York before proceeding Northwards.

I have never heard how we made acquaintance at Tuthill's Farm; I suppose the life there seemed so natural that I never questioned it, until opportunity for learning was lost. Happy in the present, a child regards not the past; the years rolled by so quietly and smoothly that my imagination could hardly have pictured a different existence, even had memory suggested it; but memory was bounded by the barrier of sea in front and sombre forest behind, wandering gaily indeed through a labyrinth of homely scenes, only to lose the clue at the threshold of a wider vision.

I knew that the people were not my people, the home not my home, the other children not my father's; but I knew not how or why we had come there, or whence or when; and as year after year passed leaving us undisturbed, I began to believe the skies would fall before change were possible at Tuthill's Farm. All we looked forward to was the variety of the seasons; to the summer and the long harvest days, when the sea shone like glass beneath the trembling haze which dimmed the city from our view, and the deepest forest glades were scarcely proof against the onslaught of noontide rays. Then came glorious autumn—brightness without heat—when the great trees donned their loveliest harmonies of colour, in hues all blended, but every leaf embroidered with King Frost's delicate livery, ere they dropped silently and reluctantly to the muffled earth. Winter succeeded, and waiting for the spring—spring heralded by torrents of rain, and fogs, and thaw. Hudson rushed down in turgid flood from the uplands, bearing huge ice-rafts which loomed past mysteriously, tempting embarcation on a weird voyage into the unknown. At that season passage to the city became dangerous, and I loved the thaw for keeping my father at home sometimes for weeks together. Thus simple were the changes rung on the bells of Time at Tuthill's Farm.

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Yet stirring events were afoot in those days; only a faint echo came wafted over the water to our tranquil home, of wars and rumours of wars, with which the air of the city was rife; but we knew that there was constant plotting and planning to thwart the King's Government, and that His Majesty's loyal province of New York was little better than a hot-bed of discontent, kept in check only by fear of the French, upon whom even more hatred was lavished than upon the detested Lords of Trade; thus there was never any real peace in the city, for in proportion as France lost ground in the North, the anti-English feeling and craving for independence was fomented in the South; petulant petitions and sullen obstruction of authority alternated with occasional rioting and open defiance; while the rare intervals, during which harmony seemed to prevail between the citizens and the Government, could plainly be traced to some reverse of the troops on the frontier, impelling collective action in face of a common foe.

But worse than all the troubles born of this Nationalistic spirit were the constant alarms from the Indians. The restrictions in trade, harassing and vexatious as they were, only touched men's pockets; the Indians threatened their lives, and aroused a savage indignation at the news of bloody massacres, which completely cast into the shade mere mercenary grievances. Now it was some enterprising settler exploiting an outlying district, who was attacked and murdered with his whole family, only a heap of charred ruins remaining to mark the site of his homestead. Now it was a party of merchants or trappers with their wares on the way to Ontario, assailed at a portage or during the night halt, whose fate was surmised from their never reaching the lakes, or ascertained months afterwards by the chance discovery of some remnant of the loot in an Indian village. Even the stockade forts planted in the wilds for the encouragement of traders afforded no adequate protection against the ruthless cunning of the savages, and relief parties, hastily despatched on the first tidings of a siege, often arrived only to be greeted by the hideous spectacle of their comrades' scalped heads impaled in ghastly mockery upon the palisades raised for defence.

Indeed there were few families in the city but could reckon some of their kinsfolk exposed to actual danger from the Indians; the fate which overtook one was felt to impend over all; and every fresh outrage enhanced the implacable hatred and hostility between the White man and the Red. Moreover, there

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was an additional sting in the thought that the Indians were the sole bar to unlimited extension of boundaries, and that they blocked out the Colonists from the full enjoyment of their charter-bestowed privileges to possess the lands westward to the Pacific; for little though the true import of this concession was realized, there was a general eagerness to push exploration far beyond existing limits, in the search after new trade-routes and water-ways to enrich settlers at the expense of their savage and ignorant neighbours.

That the Indians received encouragement and even rewards from the French for their outrages upon our people, was a matter of ordinary assertion; for my part, it seems as easy to suppose that the loss of lands and hunting-grounds wrested by the daily increasing power of the strangers on the coast, sufficiently accounted for intense antipathy towards the invaders; while the very fact of a tribe's existence being jeopardized by English conquests caused it to turn a favourable ear to the French in Canada, whose presence afforded equal facilities for trading, without risk of encroachment.

Be the reason what it may, there is no doubt that the French were saddled with much of the odium attaching to the Indian massacres, whether they really sowed the seeds or not, and an absorbing passion for their expulsion from America gradually developed itself. Troubles with the Indians, men argued, would then vanish, and the way be cleared for dealing with the English restrictions on trade, unembarrassed, in the event of a crisis, by the neighbourhood of a second power ready to take the place of the British garrisons whenever they might be withdrawn or compelled to retire.

But it was only far-seeing people who carried the argument to this conclusion. The majority halted at the stage of attributing every misfortune to the French, and thus there sprang up a spurious kind of loyalty, which almost blossomed into enthusiasm on occasion. So when the news got abroad that gallant Colonel Wolfe had come to drive the enemy out of Canada, every citizen was loud in his welcome, and wished his expedition God-speed, with fervent prayers for its success.

All this we learned piece-meal from my father's talks with Mr. Tuthill. Seldom indeed did he allow himself to discuss at home the affairs of the city, pictured in our childish imagination as a fairy palace of delights and forbidden joys after which we increasingly hankered; every chance word let fall in our hearing

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we eagerly treasured up and chattered over long afterwards; fancy helped to fill the gaps in our intelligence, and current events, from the halo of mystery surrounding them, assumed in our eyes an importance doubtless merited, but rarely bestowed by heedless children; indeed, I have noticed among older people that familiarity with stirring scenes is very apt to breed carelessness, if not contempt.

We had heard something of Colonel Wolfe's prowess, and at once dubbed him the great champion who was to deliver America from the wicked French, and utterly conquer the Indians. All summer, occasional tidings from the war kept us thrilled with expectation, and when the siege of Quebec was begun, in my excitement I ventured so far as to ask my father one day how matters were faring. I remember now his look of wonder at my knowing or caring about the campaign. It seemed as if he had suddenly awoke to a knowledge of my age, and through my habit of concealing interest in topics which he studiously avoided, he still thought me a child of six years old instead of an inquisitive girl of sixteen. He began to question me as to how much I knew, and smiling at last at my mingled facts and fancies, he promised that since I had gleaned so well I should henceforth reap the fruits of knowledge; and from that time forward, not a day passed without his telling me what he heard in the city, carefully sifting the rumours, and directing me to the few grains of truth among them.

Until then I had never really known my father; he had always looked upon and conversed with me as a child, which, in my own estimation at least, I had long ceased to be! There is nothing which prevents confidence or affection more than a sense of being looked down upon; but I now believe that my father had purposely abstained from arousing my interest in public affairs, recollecting the calamities entailed by his own ill-fated participation in them; and yet he retained enough of his old fervour, to care little for any one who could not feel the excitement of the times.

But the barrier between us was completely broken down at last; seeing the impossibility of repressing my thirst for knowledge, he allowed himself to show a pleasure and pride in my enthusiasm which vastly stimulated it.

All I heard was faithfully retailed to the younger Tuthills, and from living in gross ignorance of everything outside the Farm, our whole household became fired with intense interest in

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every movement of troops on the frontier, or of revolutionary import in the city.

At length came the great news of the capture of Quebec, attended by the glorious victory for our arms in a battle hardly lost and hardly won at the expense of two brave generals' lives. We grieved, indeed, more than we rejoiced, for time had only confirmed our hero-worship; but in the city the death of Wolfe was almost forgotten in exuberant joy at the defeat of the French, and preparations for giving a reception of unparalleled magnificence to the victorious troops on their return.

Among all the festivities designed to mark the importance of the event, none was looked forward to with greater eagerness than the concluding ceremony of burning the French King and the commanders of his Canadian army in effigy over a huge bonfire; at this spectacle the soldiers lately returned were to assist; though few in number, their presence, aided by the thought of their prowess, was expected to raise to fever pitch the excitement always shown by the citizens on occasions of public rejoicing. The sight of illuminations and bonfires seemed invariably to give the spur to loyalty, and were freely resorted to by Governors of the Province with that intent; sometimes indeed upon pretexts so flimsy that nobody knew or cared about the anniversary commemorated, but never without adding considerably to the Governor's personal popularity.

On the present occasion, however, it would be difficult for enthusiasm to magnify unduly the real value of the achievement, for the conquest of Canada, which now seemed certain, hoped and fought for, as it had been, through years of baffling disappointment, with an obstinate perseverance that ignored defeats, was a prize well worthy of all the exultation naturally and abundantly provoked by final success.

It was arranged that the troops should be escorted to the scene of the bonfire by an enormous torch-light procession of citizens. The illumination of every house along the route was a matter of course; in this respect, indeed, discretion was nominally left to the occupants, but an outward show of sympathy was effectively secured by a time-honoured though lawless custom. Wherever a house remained dark, the procession would halt and demand admission, by force, if necessary; a contingent of torch-bearers was installed as a garrison, and the luckless inmates were obliged to join the ranks outside, leaving their property to the not over-tender mercies of the excited braves. Little redress

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was obtainable from the authorities; such an evident token of disloyalty was held to merit the ensuing visitation; so peaceable householders generally contented themselves with a grumbling protest, and fell in with the humour of the day: whereby the magnificence of the illuminations was greatly enhanced, if naught else.

After much entreaty, we prevailed upon my father and Mr. Tuthill to promise us a visit to the city on the great day. Esther and Jane Tuthill were nearly as old as myself, but none of us had ever crossed the Hudson. Indeed I do not think we should have stirred from the farm precincts to this day, through lack of courage to ask so vast a favour, had not the novel bond of a common interest emboldened us to make the request, and disposed my father to acquiesce in our witnessing this visible triumph of a cause so dear to all our hearts.

At last the day arrived; it was past noon when we started, our ears tingling in the keen frosty air, as we walked down to the ferry-boat for our first voyage; a slight nervousness at being actually afloat and losing touch of the land soon vanished in the excitement of nearing the city, which well-nigh involved us in the penalty of rashness for making too great haste to leap on shore.

How well I remember that afternoon's walk through the city! Everything seemed so new and strange that my mind could not keep pace with my eyes; and I despaired of being able to observe one half the wondrous sights which I might not have another opportunity of inspecting for years to come. I was confused by the numbers of people and rows of houses and stores, which appeared marvellous to one accustomed to the solitudes of the Farm; and the crowd in the streets that day was unusual even for New York.

Towards dusk we made for the house of one of my father's friends, a Mr. Edmiston, whence we were to view the procession before returning late at night to the farm. The Edmistons were genuine loyalists, and were making great preparations for a brilliant illumination, so that our help was welcome in the arrangement of the numerous lanterns and candles, fixing the coloured shades, and displaying everything to the best advantage. It was a task that took time, a task, moreover, that was doubled by the mischievous pranks of the youngest child of the house, a little rogue who seemed to take an especial delight in hindering us, and was always hiding the lanterns or moving them

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to places where they would make no show; threats and coaxing were equally uselesss, but at length he appeared suddenly tired of making mischief, and allowed us to finish the work in peace.

Our preparations had not been long completed before we heard drums in the distance announcing the march of the procession. In the houses opposite, lights were already blazing, but Mr. Edmiston was frugal as well as loyal, and restrained our ardour to the last moment. At length a nearer burst of music warned us against delay, and seizing tapers, we hurried to our allotted posts. A thrill of pleasure possessed me at the thought of contributing with my own hand to do honour to the victorious army; I flew along the passage to the furthest lantern at a speed which almost extinguished the taper; but shading it from the draught, I applied it carefully to the wick, when, oh horror! no answering flame leaped up. In vain I tried, again, and yet again; in despair I turned to the next lamp; the same result: no better with a third, a fourth, a fifth; nothing but spluttering oil and the dim taper's glimmer mocked my endeavours. The procession, I could hear, was close at hand; everlasting shame must rest upon me if this window were alone left dark; yet, what to do? Doubtless the fault lay in my stupidity, and I must go and confess, to my bitter disgrace, having failed in the task so simple. Well, 'twas no good to wait! Back I rushed in tears to the kitchen, ready to die rather than face the others whom I saw collected before me. On entering, I perceived at once from their looks that something serious had happened. Few words were needed to explain—not a single lamp or candle in the house had been lighted; mine were but a sample of all!

A thought flashed across me: "Where is that child?" I asked. We called—no answer; he was not in the room, though no one had missed him. Then we all felt, remembering his curious spite against the illuminations, that this was the little imp's handiwork; just as we hoped his mischief was at an end, he had doubtless gone round and damped everything!

At any other time we might perhaps have laughed over such a piece of folly, but just now we felt ready to aid Mr. Edmiston in the execution of a muttered vow to flay the young scamp alive when he caught him; for if the mob found the house dark, it was impossible to reckon upon their good behaviour.

My father instantly volunteered to seek help from the neighbours; but they, good folks, held fast to their own, and would part with none of their lamps; barely enough for themselves

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they declared; in truth I think they were well pleased at misfortune having overtaken Mr. Edmiston, whose energy had so often before cast their efforts into the shade.

We still clung to the hope that the mob might recognize the house as one always conspicuous for a loyal display, and attribute the present contrast to unforeseen accident rather than intention; but the thought gave scant comfort, for who, after all, could expect a crowd, inflamed by drink and the excitement of the march, to take count of this house or that in the darkness on such an occasion. The suspense could not be long; knots of men were fast collecting in the street, and we could overhear many ill-natured sneers and even threats among the loungers; from these, however, no actual violence need be feared, such as seemed imminent when the front ranks of the procession came up. But Mr. Edmiston straightway threw open the house door and stood waving his hat and shouting "God save the King!" with so fine an air, that the foremost torch-bearers, anxious, no doubt, to maintain their position of honour, passed on without stopping to molest us further than by hurling a couple of torches at the house, to give Mr. Edmiston, as they said, something to use his bellows upon!

The procession was divided into several portions, each composed of a body of soldiers, with a civilian escort. Five of these had already passed us, but evidently with increasing reluctance, and difficulty in advancing caused by halts and blocks in front. On the appearance of the sixth division we immediately perceived that it contained some of the wilder spirits bent on mischief. "Here's a proper kennel for French curs!" cried one; "'Tis an old badger that needs drawing," answered another; "See, he's half out of the hole already," pointing to poor Mr. Edmiston on guard in the doorway. Indeed, the general attitude of the mob now became so dangerous, that our host's courage rapidly failed him, and at length he fled back into the house for shelter, closing the door upon the angry crowd. This action was the signal for a frantic yell and movement to attack us; in a moment we heard a crash against the door. Mr. Edmiston in his hasty retreat had failed to secure the bolts, and it burst open, admitting a throng of riotous ruffians. The horrible flare and smoke of torches, the shouting, and threats to burn the house down over our heads were terrible beyond measure. My father had tried in vain to stem the tide of assailants. I lost sight of him, and was hopelessly looking round for some hiding-place,

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when I suddenly felt myself seized by two of the ruffians. Easily overcoming my struggles, they dragged me out of the house, to what awful fate I knew not. The cold night-air forbade swooning, and condemned me to the most intense torture of mind and body. Even the sight of so furious a mob was terrible enough; but now I was exposed a helpless victim to their worst passions, expecting every moment to be trampled or torn to death.

Wrought to extreme agony by the thought of my father's probable murder, writhing under the brutal jests of my captors, and the painful blows I received as they pushed roughly through the thickest of the surging mass, I should surely soon have been bereft of reason, if not of life.

But suddenly I felt the ruffians loosen their grasp and stagger back. I had hardly time to find my own footing, before I saw them reeling and falling heavily to the ground, while the crowd sheepishly slunk away, cursed for cowards all by a commanding voice that threatened a short shrift and long rope for every one of them.

Then I heard myself addressed, with assurance of safety and questions as to my presence among the rogues without an escort. But even the strong shield of an English uniform could not immediately dispel my terror, and I could only stammer out a few halting words about the raid on Mr. Edmiston's house. My protector, however, cut explanation short, and gently taking me in his arms, strode on the instant, through the yielding crowd, to the door. There he set me down, and we entered together. To my surprise, the parlour was empty. Hastening again into the street, he returned, followed by half-a-dozen soldiers, whom he had found still sober enough to recognize and obey an officer. Two were posted at the door, with orders to let no one pass in or out; with the others, he approached the kitchen—to trap the rats, as he said.

The scene there puzzled me. The room was full of men, who had evidently discovered Mr. Edmiston's store of spirits, but retained sufficient self-control to preserve the semblance of an orderly attitude; all round the sides of the room they had ranged themselves, save where the line was broken by the big oak table pushed against the wall, to form a platform upon which a few of the most active had mounted to harangue their comrades. In the middle, on a couple of benches, sat the victims, all suffering evidently from wounds or terror. There was my father, his face horribly disfigured with blood, and Mr. Edmiston almost palsied with fright; the Tuthill girls looking ghastly white, and

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the younger children of the house sobbing and crying their eyes out.

Then it dawned upon me that this was a Court of mock justice, presided over by Judge Lynch, and I shuddered at the thought of the probable fate in store for the accused, had not my own fortunate rescue proved the means of delivering them. Even now I felt great anxiety, for there were some twenty or thirty men assembled against us, and the odds were large.

Evidently our entrance was quite unexpected. The speakers on the platform, before they could recover from their surprise, were seized by the soldiers; while the rest, like cowards, instinctively began to beat a retreat towards the door, on finding themselves confronted by the King's uniform.

"Nay!" exclaimed the officer, "not quite so fast, my fine friends. I must have your names for the Governor, that he may learn what loyal and faithful citizens you are, and reward you suitably for this evening's work!"

Spoken to the accompaniment of a drawn sword, these words had their effect, and slowly, one by one, the ruffians passed out, till none were left but the ringleaders.

"To gaol with those scoundrels!" was the next order. "We'll deal with them to-morrow."

Then, turning to my father, our preserver angrily demanded an explanation of the riotous scene that had called for interference.

"Now, sir, perhaps you will condescend to enlighten me as to your part in this disturbance. Here am I, His Majesty's Captain of Foot, kept waiting upon the humour of a brawling mob, as if I were the sheriff's officer to preserve order in citizens' dwellings, and keep silly girls out of harm's way; and all, forsooth, to warrant a fool's claim to play the rebel in this loyal city without let or hindrance if he be so minded! Why, sir, had I not chanced on the spot, this young lady would assuredly have been murdered outright, your house wrecked, and yourself in all probability swinging from the nearest tree, a very scandal to His Majesty's orderly government! How dare you thus flaunt your infernal treason in people's faces, ready, I suppose, to convict them of sympathy if they disregard, and turbulence if they punish it as it deserves? Beware, sir; a second offence of this sort may not be condoned, even if it escapes Lynch justice!

"For your sake, madam," he continued, turning with a low bow to me, "I profoundly regret what has occurred; allow me to express my satisfaction at having been the lucky means of

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saving you from indignities to which the folly of others has exposed you, and to assure you that you will always command my services."

I had not the courage to make reply to this address; nor indeed had any one time to do so, for he turned on his heel and left the house before even my father could make answer, either to thank him for our rescue, or refute the groundless charge of disloyalty.

The disappearance of danger seemed to bring small comfort to poor Mr. Edmiston, who sat in silent despair surveying the wreck of his furniture, and quite overwhelmed by misfortune. In vain we tried to rouse him with the consolation of safety; but at length, finding all efforts fruitless, my father, though still weak from his ill-usage, decided that we should stay no longer. Sadly then we left the house which we had entered so gaily only a few hours ago, and trudged over the snow to the ferry.

The street was empty and quiet enough; yet still the six soldiers stood there on guard, in case of renewed disturbance, proving the officer kinder than his words. But all the city had flocked to the bonfire, just then at its height, to judge by the ruddy glow in the sky, and a few flickering tongues of flame we could see spurting above the dark outline of houses as we crossed the river.

How I hated the bonfire, and illuminations, and everything to do with the city that had been so cruel to us! Tuthill's Farm seemed a haven of rest indeed, and its modest lamp glinting over the dark water to beckon us home, shone more welcome than ever harbour lights to sailors after a stormy voyage.

II.

Nevertheless, after that eventful visit to the city, our quiet life at the Farm never thoroughly contented me. I had tasted excitement, and craved for more. For the first time in my life I began to feel dull; even the pleasure of discussing events with my father was denied, for again he fell into the old silent habits, and could not be induced to break through his reserve.

Nothing was left for us girls but the record of our own adventures, and upon that slight record we managed to rear a very respectable fabric, wherein a niche was found for each of our recent acquaintance, whose previous history we composed

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to our entire satisfaction, with equal confidence forestalling their destined future. Among all the figures of the pantomime (for truth was so grotesquely distorted as to earn the title) none afforded wider scope for fancy than that of the English officer who had rescued us from the violence of the mob. The contrast of his fierce courage when quelling the rioters with his gentle courtesy towards me, the kindness he displayed in protecting us from actual harm, and the rudeness and severity of his language to my father, gave plenty of material for the creation of an image varying with our mood of the moment. With the outline of a fine face and figure (for on these points no variation was possible) we pictured him in every variety of light and shade, attributing sometimes all the graces of an angel, and as often investing him with fiendish wickedness; but the idea never occurred to us of conceiving a mean between the extremes of virtue and vice, nor could we imagine a character brave yet cruel, savage yet tender.

I noticed that although to the young folks my father had little to say, his conversations with Mr. Tuthill grew more earnest and frequent than usual. This set me wondering, for my father took as little interest in the business of the farm as Mr. Tuthill in matters outside it; and I observed further after one of these long talks neither of them would have a good word for anybody that evening, but they would sit buried in thought often for hours together.

One day also I chanced to be in the wood-shed, and overheard part of the conversation as they passed close to where I was.

"I tell you it is impossible for me to refuse the offer," said my father.

"But what would you do with your daughter?" was the reply. "She could not accompany you."

"Why not? She has made a longer and more perilous journey with me already. . . ."

I could hear no more, though I strained my ears to the utmost. All day I pondered over the few sentences which revealed such a mighty change impending. This then was the upshot of my father's secret conferences with Mr. Tuthill—that we were to leave the Farm, to break up the home which custom had made seem ours by right. But why? What could the offer be that was tempting my father, and whither did he purpose to direct our steps? I felt as though excitement would kill me unless the riddle was expounded.

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My distraction soon became noticed, but I could not summon courage to explain the reason and make a confession of eavesdropping.

At length, however, I could bear the suspense no further, and, being asked one evening what ailed me, I burst into tears and besought my father to let me know the truth for good or for ill. Very solemn and grave was his face then; not a word of rebuke or anger escaped his lips; but tenderly drawing me towards him, he unfolded my mystery.

Our livelihood had, as I knew, been gained by his instructing the officers of the garrison in the art of Fence, whereby he had been enabled to recompense Mr. Tuthill for lodging.

But now several of his pupils were under orders for an expedition of uncertain duration to a frontier post, and it was doubtful whether he could acquire the same footing in the detachment that would succeed to the charge of the city. Invited to accompany the marching column, he hesitated only from consideration of my welfare; the thought of leaving me behind seemed never to have occurred to him; either I must go, or he must stay; and in the end he had decided to take me. I should be the only woman of the party, but for that there was no help; and he knew, he said, that my mother's child would not be wanting in courage.

Spring ripened into summer before the preparations for the expedition were complete. Once schooled to the idea of deserting the Farm, I was seized with my old ardour, which had been quenched by the disaster at the procession, to see the world and lead a more active life. Indeed so thoroughly did I become reconciled to the prospect, that I found myself more often tormented by misgivings lest something might chance to spoil our plans, than saddened at the necessity for breaking up our home and casting ourselves adrift upon an unknown sea.

Yet the wrench, when it came, was hard to bear; there is always a chilling sense of isolation and insignificance at the moment when links with the past are being severed, before one has taken root elsewhere; and I felt very miserable as we were rowed across Hudson. Not till we had reached the camp in the fields outside the city could I rid myself of the melancholy which had seized me; but the contagious good-humour and the novel stir of preparations proved irresistible, and soon reconciled me to the strange company. The force was composed of some fifty men and officers, who received us with right royal welcome.

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Our arrival had evidently been expected. I felt that I was the object of much curiosity, and was hardly allowed an interval between my blushes at being constantly saluted by the soldiers we came across, and finding myself introduced to so many officers by my father, who of course knew them all. That night the troops were to bivouac on the spot, and start the next morning. I found that a tent was provided for me; but the troops all slept on the open ground, for our journey lay through country where it was impossible to take heavy baggage, and in summer weather it was no hardship to be canopied by the stars. My father lay at the door of my tent wrapped in his plaid, a relic of his beloved Scotland. He had refused the offer of a tent for himself, saying that he would fare as the soldiers fared.

I must confess I did not sleep much that night, and rejoiced at the sound of the bugle call at dawn, which I instinctively recognized as the signal for rousing the camp.

My father had arranged for us to take our meals with the officers, of whom there were six; three only in actual command of the soldiers, and three who had obtained leave to accompany the expedition for love of sport and weariness of city routine.

Breakfast over, the camp was struck, and we all embarked in the *batteaux*, in which the greater part of the journey was to be made. It was calculated that we should reach the fort in about six weeks; up Hudson lay our road for many miles: then westward up one of the tributary streams till we could advance no further, even by repeated portage, and, to wind up, a march through the almost pathless forest to Fort Seneca on the head waters of the Ohio.

Memorable as the journey was to me, no adventures distinguished it. Day after day the men toiled on at the oars, a monotonous task, only varied, when we left Hudson, by the carrying places which entailed a severer labour. Progress became slower than ever, for the rapids to be passed were long and frequent, and a few miles often took days to accomplish, though the loads were constantly lightened as we consumed the stores from home.

I never regretted these delays, for the portages were always at some especially lovely spot, and it was delightful to be free to roam in the forest after the forced inactivity of the voyage. At the portages, too, I felt myself useful, for no one was above lending a hand in the work of transporting the baggage, and my

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father and the officers all worked their hardest wherever help seemed most wanted.

At length we reached the point where we must leave the river and take to the forest. A splendid fall blocked the river, above which it descended a mere torrent from the slopes of the mountains. Here we found a camp of friendly Indians waiting for us; some of them were to take back the *batteaux* to the city, and the rest to guide us through the forest to Fort Seneca. I was thoroughly frightened at the first sight of these savages, their dark skins, their weapons and their strange attire all so new to me. Soon my alarm changed into curiosity, and a strong desire to know something of their habits, and penetrate the reserve which took refuge in a dignified and courteous formality from all efforts to undermine it.

We halted for two or three days, while the baggage was being transferred from the *batteaux*, and saw them depart down the stream again in charge of a large body of Indians. I wondered whether they would reach the city in safety; but the Indians, treacherous and thievish though they are, have never been known to break their word, even to an enemy, when once pledged by the acceptance or exchange of a belt of wampum skins; for they honour the ceremony as a sacred covenant binding them faithfully to execute a promise thus consecrated.

At the first meeting the Commander of our troops duly offered and accepted the belt; he was a swaggering fellow, who openly confessed his contempt for the Indians, and scorned their customs; but the orders of the government were wisely stringent, enforcing respect and compliance with the Red man's methods in all transactions with them; so the ceremony was accurately, and with the aid of a not too literal interpretation, politely gone through, and I believe that every man among the Indians would have died rather than that a hair of our heads should be injured under their escort, or a single *batteau* fail of safe return.

When the march began, every day brought proof of the ease with which our expedition could have been overwhelmed, had the savages been foes instead of friends. The horrible tales of Indian warfare which had frightened us as children, seemed ever about to be realized. Now in single file through the dense underwood, now among the thick trunks which rendered any order of march impracticable; at one time hemmed in between the forest and some lake or stream; at another in a glen or defile with cliffs towering up on either side, how could the soldiers, hampered by

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their clumsy uniforms and baggage, and only trained to fight in regular formation, ever have rallied or withstood a sudden attack from an unseen foe, swooping upon them from chosen ambush, at some spot where the perplexities of the road made resistance unavailing? Indeed such a journey as ours would have been hardly possible in war-time, or only at the greatest risk and danger. At present, however, few of the tribes were hostile, and we were safe enough for the time; the fear, which every one felt but none expressed, was lest anything should happen to exasperate the Indians, who are fickle as the wind, and thus endanger the safety of the fort; the main object of the expedition was to keep them in good humour by presents and purchases of their pelfries, and so pave the way for a treaty in which it was hoped that the Indians would barter away their lands to the King for the benefit of settlers.

Such a mission required very delicate tact and management, the more so because the force indispensable to secure safety naturally tended to raise suspicion as to its objects. The pioneer of the expedition who had established the post now to be enlarged and fortified, was a man of long experience in dealing with the Indians, and had so far won their confidence as to obtain consent to our coming, ostensibly on the grounds of aiding the tribes against their neighbours, who were in league with the French, and preventing raids. The King would not leave his allies to fight alone, they were told. Fort Seneca should be a rallying-point for all the nations against the further advance of a hated foe who had already promised their lands as the prize of victory. Their cupidity was also worked upon by the prospect of a convenient trading centre, where a ready market for their skins would enable them to satisfy the craving for fire-water.

So it happened that the Indians were favourably disposed towards us at the outset, in spite of a natural antipathy towards settlers; but all the good that had been done might easily be annulled by thoughtless or high-handed conduct on our part when we took over the command of the post from the Agent I have mentioned. And the experience of the expedition thus far had already raised serious misgivings as to the capacity of its commander for any operations not contained in the book of tactics. He was a brave officer enough, but a thorough martinet, who would rather have had his men massacred in column than won a battle by irregular strategy.

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At length, when the soldiers were as weary of the march as they had before been of rowing, we reached Fort Seneca. Suddenly emerging from a thick belt of forest, we saw it close in front of us ; just a cluster of rough log-cabins, with the English flag waving over them, and a broad bend of the deep, calm river beyond reflecting the wooded slopes which fringed the opposite shore.

Joy at gaining the haven where we would be, made me feel for the moment as if this were home indeed, and all difficulties and dangers receded into far distance. Around the bivouac fires that night there was an indescribable air of contentment and relief at the march being ended, which told how severe had been the work, though borne uncomplainingly by the soldiers. I too was thankful to be spared the fatigues of daily journeyings, and looked forward to our new life with expectant eagerness.

Idleness reigned in the camp for the next day or two, but activity was soon resumed in a fresh direction. The soldiers of our expedition had already been taught that in the backwoods a man must be master of more trades than one, and after serving as sailors and then as baggage-carriers, they had next to learn carpentering and building, in the construction of a regular fort, of sufficient size to accommodate the whole force, and strength to stand a siege by the Indians in case of need. It soon appeared that none of the officers possessed such knowledge of Indian warfare as was required for planning the fort to the best advantage for purposes of defence, and here we found the experience of the Agent who remained with us to superintend the trading invaluable ; but it was rather a sore point with the Commandant that he could not dispense with assistance in a matter of soldiering like this, although the Agent contrived to keep himself as much in the background as possible.

The work was long and arduous ; the chief part of the defences lay in a double line of palisades with a considerable distance between, and flanked by bastions at the angles. In the centre of the ground within, log houses were built upon a quadrangle, their outer walls pierced for musketry. The nature of the place lent itself to this plan, the banks of the river rising into an eminence from which the open space behind could be commanded as far as the forest by those within the stockade ; the interval was small, however, and it was intended to be enlarged by cutting away bushes and trees, an operation that might be postponed until after the main work was completed. On the riverside it was

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necessary to secure free access to the water, since there was no other means of supplying the fort; part of the outer fence was therefore carried into the stream at a distance of two or three yards from the edge, and the bed of the river deepened close to the bank, so as to afford a convenient supply from the running water. On land, a deep ditch was dug outside the palisades, while a single narrow gateway gave admission to the fort itself.

Everything was done with timber; of this, fortunately, there was no lack, nor of labour to fell it; but many weeks passed before the last stake had been driven home, and we were at last able to feel ourselves safe against any emergency. It was, I think, the growing belief in impending danger that nerved the soldiers to work with unremitting energy at the defences.

(*To be concluded.*)

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MRS. BARBAULD AND HER PUPIL.

ABOUT a century ago, before the days of High Schools, University Extension Lectures, and Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations, there lived at Hampstead a lady best known for her literary works, but equally successful as a teacher.

The Hampstead in which she lived was as different from the Hampstead we know now as are the past and present systems of education. Where streets and villas are now seen, there were then rural fields and lanes. But though quiet and retired, there was plenty of mental activity in the place; and no house in it could have been more full of intellectual interests than that of the Rev. Rochemont and his wife Anna Lætitia Barbauld. It is not as a writer that we are now going to think of her, but as teacher and friend. It is in these characters she shows herself in her letters to one of her pupils, Lydia R. But before quoting from them, perhaps it would be well to remind ourselves of a few events in the pathetic story of Mrs. Barbauld's married life.

Anna Lætitia Aikin was the daughter of Dr. Aikin, head of Warrington Academy, a famous Nonconformist College. In 1774 she left her father's house to become the wife of Mr. Barbauld, descendant of a French Protestant family. It was little wonder that her parents objected to the union, for Rochemont Barbauld had already had one attack of insanity; but affection, partly it seems inspired by pity, moved Anna to listen to his suit. Even before the last fatal attack of his malady, the fits of uncontrollable excitement and irritation to which he was subject, must have been a perpetual cause of anxiety to her. But their attachment to one another helped to lighten the burden, borne on her side in a brave and cheerful spirit, as her letters abundantly prove.

And she had much to help her, fortunately. Her large and sympathetic mind was full of interests. There was her husband's school for boys at Palgrave in Norfolk, their first home, which it

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is said owed most of its success to her. There were her own near relations, especially the little nephew whom she adopted, the son of her brother Dr. Aikin; and her clever niece Lucy, to whom she was much attached; there were the neighbours who surrounded the different houses in which the Barbaulds successively lived, and in whose affairs she took a genial interest; there were literary friends and acquaintances in whose society her mind must have delighted—the Baillies, the Edgeworths, the Taylors, Miss Burney, Mrs. Siddons, Hannah More, Crabbe, Robertson, Mrs. Montagu, Dr. Priestley, and others; and there were her own literary occupations, enjoyable in themselves, and made the more delightful by success. If she was not able, on account of her husband's health, to act on her friend Mrs. Montagu's advice to keep a school for girls, in which she would probably have been as happy as she would have been successful, at least she could have one or two young-lady pupils, on whom she could exercise her talent for education.

Her correspondence with the one whom we have mentioned began after the Barbaulds had given up their school at Palgrave and moved to Hampstead, where she seems to have passed the busiest period of her life. Here she lived until one of her husband's illnesses made it desirable that they should take a house at Stoke Newington, to be near her brother Dr. Aikin; and here she stayed on after the painful death of Mr. Barbauld.

As it is uninteresting only to know one side in a correspondence, we will say a few words about the character and circumstances of the lady to whom the letters are written.

Like Mr. Barbauld, Lydia R. belonged to a Nonconformist family. Her father died in 1786, when she was still in the nursery, leaving her—an only child—to the care of a devoted mother. She seems to have deserved all the love showered upon her, for a more docile, affectionate and conscientious creature never lived. Indeed she was rather too painfully conscientious for her own happiness, as every indication in her letters and diary proves. When she grew up, being a gentle and attractive girl and something of an heiress, it was natural that she should have many admirers. The successful one was William Withering, son of the famous botanist, Justice of the Peace, and Captain in a Warwickshire regiment of Militia. He seems to have been a worthy, narrow-minded, opiniated and formal man, who continued to over-train his already well-trained and submissive wife.

From her own account given in her diaries, their life together

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was a happy one. It is full of such expressions as this—a part only of one of her elaborate sentences! ". . . blest with my best-beloved in mutual health, peace, competence, and in the calm enjoyment of domestic happiness, with my days devoted to rational, and I hope improving pursuits to the head and heart," &c. &c.

The diary evidently passed under the eye of her "best beloved." Let us hope that it was not of the nature of a schoolboy's letter home, written under the supervision of the schoolmaster; but a real, though pedantic expression of her feelings.

If it were indeed true, that her nature was too sensitive and her mind too delicate to bear the strain of life, that strain was soon to be removed. After eight years of marriage, Lydia's life as a responsible being came to an end for ever in this world. The same cloud of mental disease that had darkened the happiness of the Barbaulds' home, descended on Lydia's mind, never to be lifted until her death, about fifty years afterwards.

An old diary of her husband's still in existence, shows how carefully he watched and tended her, and the affectionate interest he took in her sad condition. After his death she lived on in her pretty country place in Somersetshire, under the care of kind and devoted attendants. It was little wonder that they were fond of her, for even in her malady she showed her lovable disposition; and the writer of these pages remembers her a pretty old lady, full of smiles and curtsies, welcoming the friends who came to the house; and pleased, like a child, when children brought her their toys to show her.

But we must go back many years, to the time when Lydia, a prim and proper little maiden, between ten and eleven years old, was to be introduced to Mrs. Barbauld.

The first letter in the correspondence is to Lydia's mother, and Mrs. Barbauld proposes,—"as intimacy is never so speedily formed as when people are in the same house together, and a child is generally shy and distant at first, and requires to be familiarized by degrees like a little bird,"—that Lydia should be sent to stay in the house with her for a few weeks, where a young Miss Finch "would be a pretty companion for her." At the end of her letter, she gives a list of books from a catalogue sent by Mr. R., "of which there is a chance of her reading part." Those who think that we, in our own day, have the advantage over our ancestors in the matter of education, will see that a hundred years ago young ladies were expected to read a good many solid books.

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Unfortunately part of the page on which the list is written has been torn away, so that only a portion of it can be given. But it is long enough. Here it is:

"History of England.—Macaulay's Do. (Charlotte Macaulay's History of the Stuart Dynasty.)—Telemachus.—Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.—European settlements in America.—Universal History. —View of Do.—History of Charles V.—History of Charles XII.— History of Scotland.—Watson's Philip II.—Works of Lord Lyttelton.— Middleton's Life of Cicero.—Economy of Human Life.—Spectator— Rambler—Adventurer.—Tooke's Pantheon.—Roman History and English History in question and answer.—History of England in Letters from a Nobleman to his Son; besides many volumes of poetry by Milton, Akenside, Dryden, Gay, Gray, and Thomson."

How many of these works little Lydia read and digested we are not told; but Mrs. Barbauld's praises bestowed on her in one of the letters, for her observations on the history she had read, show that she was an attentive and thoughtful reader.

Mrs. Barbauld is fond of setting her pupil's mind to work on questions which must have taken a great deal of thinking to answer. After describing the beauties of Dorking, and giving the first prize in landscape-gardening to a certain Mr. Locke, whose place* she specially admires, she remarks, that "modern English Gardening is the art of Landscape painting, only the artist uses real trees and turf and water, instead of canvass and a box of colours." He must observe the same rules of composition, and "Mr. Locke had a consultation of painters to determine in what spot of the grounds his house would be built to most advantage. I wish," she adds, "you would give me your opinion in your next letter, *what constitutes that beauty in a landscape, with which we are so much charmed;* how much of it is owing to colour, to form, to contrast, to motion, etc?"

It would seem by the next letter that Lydia attempted some landscape-gardening in words herself, and a funny formal little composition it must have been.

"I think you are a very good landscape painter," her teacher writes, "and I hope you will some time draw them with a pencil as well as a pen, only your *cascades* must not '*gently distil*,' but rush foaming down the steep. The greater passion they put themselves into, the better. I think too, you might be satisfied with one navigable river, instead of some. I am sure we should

* Norbury Park.

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think ourselves very magnificent with *one* here. There is one thing I beg you will take care of in your landscapes, and that is to keep them in constant verdure. Ours are so burnt up at this moment, that the *russet grass*, the *brown meadow*, the *tawny slope*, are epithets much more characteristic of the objects which meet our eyes at present, than if *green* were applied to every one of them. The summer has appeared this year in all the strength and glow of warmer climates, the true child of the sun, as Thomson calls him,

"'In pride of youth and felt thro' nature's depth.'"

At the end of the letter she offers her little correspondent another intellectual nut to crack. Lydia had been reading 'Paul and Virginia,' which Mrs. Barbauld thinks, if she has the sensibility which she believes her to possess, she "will not have finished without being almost heart-broken." And she then asks her to tell her, "which kind of novels and Plays please you best, those which end fortunately or unfortunately, and which require the greatest skill in the Author to conduct?"

The next two letters are of a less instructive kind, for Mrs. Barbauld herself was taking a holiday and gives her pupil's mind a similar rest. She describes her travels in the West of England, beginning with a dreadful passage from Wales to Minehead, a little trip generally made, she says, in three or four hours, having taken "four-and-twenty in very bad weather and in a vessel without accommodations." From Minehead she went to Dulverton and Tiverton, and then to Exeter, where she visited her great friends, the Kenricks. She returns by Taunton, Glastonbury and Wells, with the views of which she is much gratified, and stays at Bath, which she prettily describes, as looking after dark "like a nest of glow-worms." In her visit to Wales the following year, she stops by the way at Clifton, where she spends "a fortnight very agreeably in the company of the Edgeworth family."

Her destination was Pitcot in Glamorganshire, where

"there are no houses to be had but cottages, not like Lady Camelford's but real thatched cottages. Ours is a mile from our friends' and I ride there every day upon old Dobbin, *behind* a young lady. I suppose you think I call her a young lady by courtesy only, but I assure you it is no such matter, for she is a very elegant woman, highly accomplished, and a great addition to our party. We look with pleasure to the little market town of Bridgend, which is four miles off and I was obliged to send there for a pen, before I could write to you.

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In short nothing can be more compleat retirement than this place. I hear the Welsh gutturals crackling all around me and I hope to-morrow to hear a sermon in Welsh, and perhaps to assist at a meeting of jumpers, who abound in this neighbourhood. I am pleased with the look of the Welsh; they have black hair and black lively eyes, with an expression of vigour and chearfulness; many of the women are without shoes and stockings. Mr. Estlin says they are a very innocent race; the sin that most easily besets them it seems, is sheep-stealing to which indeed they have great temptations, for the sheep wander abroad upon the common without any body to watch them. . . I am glad to hear you have been so diligent and spent your time so usefully.

"I am Your obliged and aff. A. L. BARBAULD."

Her letter from Norwich, written in August, 1800, is particularly interesting from the famous names mentioned in it. Norwich was a little intellectual centre, and Mrs. Barbauld would thoroughly enjoy the society there. She writes:—

"I cannot tell how you may spend your time at Birmingham; for our parts I must acknowledge that we are passing ours in complete dissipation,—calls and strolling about in the morning, visiting in the afternoon and evening. Tuesday we had a very pleasant sail up the river to a tea-drinking house. It was Mr. John Taylor's birthday, and he and Mrs. Opie sang all the way in the boat. I wished you with us on that account. Lucy [her niece Lucy Aikin] does not sing indeed, but the next day she revived the pleasure we had enjoyed by producing a copy of verses on the occasion. We have also spent a pleasant day at Mr. Kett's, where we met some of the Gurneys. Betsy Gurney is to be married on Tuesday, and half Norwich will be at the wedding. An interesting scene of leave-taking took place one day this week at her father's. Betsy, who has devoted herself very much of late to acts of charity and piety, had a school of boys and girls to the number of 80. These were all invited to drink tea and dance upon the green, and then each took leave of their benefactor, not without many tears on both sides. . . . Accept the sincere affection and esteem of Yours etc.,

"A. L. BARBAULD."

It is satisfactory to find that Lydia, too, had her holiday sometimes, and was not always improving her mind and making life "All work and no play"; for in a letter to her at Brighton Mrs. Barbauld remarks, after describing her own tranquil visit at Bedford, "a quiet and rather stupid town,"

"Thus you see our respective amusements have suited our respective periods of life. Yours gay and full of bustle, Princes, Plays, Prospects

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and Promenades—ours retired and sober. And pray when do you intend to visit Church Row again? We want your family very much, and I cast many a longing look at the windows as I go by."

Then, after a little chit-chat about friends and neighbours, the death of one of whom had prompted the poetic Lucy to produce "a copy of verses on the occasion," she gives Lydia her opinion on some famous literary works:

"And so you are reading 'Sir Charles Grandison'! I think I was about your age when I read it first. The method of carrying on the story by letters, has certainly the fault you point out. Richardson, I believe, introduced it; and it has the advantage when well-managed of giving an air of life and truth to the narrative, and making the characters, as it were, shew themselves. Sir Charles is so perfect and withal so cool, that I think he would be well-matched with *Belinda*, if she had not been born fifty years too late for him. You ask me how I like *Thaliba* (*sic*) I think there is a great deal of fancy in it and beautiful description, a very defective plan, tho' often beautiful sentiment, much Poetry and no verse. I wish I could make use of some of his magic to transport myself to the Stein at Brighton amongst you all for one day, but *hoys* I do not like, and Post-Chaises I can't afford, except my health required it, and I thank heaven it does not, so we have shut up our travelling schemes for this year, and look forward to the quiet winter evenings, and their uninterrupted literary occupations. Mr. Barbauld desires to be most affectionately remembered to yourself and along with me to Mrs. R. and Miss Harrop,

"Your ever affec^ate A. L. BARBAULD."

Here is a pleasant specimen of Mrs. Barbauld's playful style, one surprising expression in which we cannot help enjoying, as coming from so well-regulated a person as the writer.

"MY DEAR LYDIA,

"Would you rather receive a scrap of a letter, than none? Yes, you say; then the scrap you shall have, first to thank you for yours and to tell you that we are all well, but *I* am very busy; being, as I believe you know, deeply engaged in the job I have perhaps rashly undertaken. Indeed I have at present a splendid opportunity, which I think I might as well use, of getting clear with my correspondents, at little expence of my own invention. For cannot I send them some brilliant paragraphs from Richardson, from Sheridan, from Mrs. Carter, from Dr. Young all whose letters lie before me at my mercy? And for elegant compliments, in which I never dealt much, I might sprinkle every page with them. The elegance, the delicacy of my Miss Lydia's mind, her amiable and

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grateful attentions to her respectable parent—the diversified employments which fill up her well-spent day—the social ease and comfort enjoyed at her fireside,—No, hang it, this will never do! I thought I was going on very currently in the complimentary strain, and I percieve* my stupid brain has only stumbled upon downright truths. Well! I ought to conclude with making an apology for my *scribble* not *scrawl*, that word seems to have succeeded it—unfortunately this will be founded in truth also. Before I do conclude however, let me tell you that I found your letter, I knew I had not burnt it and so I enclose it.

"Adieu, Adieu, Love, Com* etc. Yours truly A. L. BARBAULD."

Perhaps it is the variety in Mrs. Barbauld's style that gives it its greatest charm—the mixture of the novel and unexpected expressions of an original mind, combined with an old-fashioned formality, as in this opening to her next letter.

"Greatly rejoiced was I on receiving a letter, and so kind and affectionate a letter, from my dear Lydia, on whom she rightly judges my thoughts often dwell, and give me leave to add, with all that complacence, affection and esteem which naturally results from so intimate a knowledge of her character, and so long an experience of her partial attachment."

Our next extract contains a remark which is certainly not applicable in the present day; when, as the reward of their artistic or intellectual attainments, ladies certainly *do* become objects of public attention.

"I was gratified last Tuesday with seeing the distribution of the medals, at the Society for the encouragement of arts, the Duke of Norfolk was President, he filled the office with much grace and contrived to say something to everybody; there were more women than men who received prizes for the arts, and as there are few occasions on which a young lady has to exhibit herself as an object of public attention, I could not help feeling greatly interested for the females who with palpitating hearts, were to receive the reward of their talents. The institute was closed the week before by a lecture from Mr. Davy, who leaves off a high favourite with the public and especially the ladies."

Neither, we are happily certain, would she have thought the observation at the end of the next passage, written not long after, a true and accurate statement, if she had lived nearly a hundred years later. She is criticising some books of her day,

* In these letters Mrs. Barbauld's spelling is retained, as well as her use of capital letters.

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and after giving her opinion, that Darwin's Poem, which he left unfinished, would be entertaining and whimsical and rich in harmony and wild in system like all his other works, she says—

"Miss Hayes's female Biography will interest our sex, but one should read a work of that kind with more pleasure, if unfortunately those women who have been most *famous*, had not been often at the same time most *infamous*. Pericles, you know, told the ladies of Greece somewhat harshly:—'As for you the best line of conduct you can pursue, is not to make yourselves talked of one way or other.' The present times are more liberal to women, but still, even in England, if you were to reckon up the women whose names are generally known, you would find the greater part were so, for vice rather than virtue."

Then follow other topics.

"So you have got Mrs. R——e again at Hampstead, and by great good luck, I hear she has lost her husband. I do not know whether I ought not to have written her a congratulatory letter upon it. I hope you have got her Selection in your society, there are really many pretty things in it. I see no new books now, for there is no book-society at Newington, so I live in utter ignorance of all literary matters. I could tell you perhaps, how many pearls were showered upon the head of the bride of Almamon, and how much marrow and sugar, with how many baskets of eggs and figs, Sultan Solyman eat for breakfast, for I have just been reading it in Gibbon; but for the productions of the present day, I know no more of them than a Hottentot, Mrs. Hunter's novel excepted, which she sent me. It is not much either above or below the standard of the last; the same want of plan and the same superabundance of trifling little circumstances. It is a great disadvantage to a woman, that with the same eyes as a man, she does not see so much as a man does. The confined range of domestic occupations; the minutiæ of dress and furniture; the pride, pomp and circumstance of visiting, do not furnish such interesting matter as the various occupations of men and the developement of characters, in the trying and varied scenes which occur in the world at large. This, as I have often thought, greatly enhances the merit of M^me^. D'Arblay's novels."

We wonder whether the serious Lydia allowed herself to smile a little over Mrs. Barbauld's rather mischievous reference to Mrs. R——e's loss. Perhaps the scenes of gaiety in which she was taking part at this time, inclined her to relax her natural gravity, for we soon find her friend writing to her,

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"I am happy to hear so good an account of you; that is to say that you are plunged into all manner of dissipation. . . . I hope you are as strong as Hercules, as indeed every young lady ought to be in order to encounter the various labours and dangers they have to undergo."

It has been said that every good woman is at heart a match-maker, and it is easy to see the grain of truth in this saying, since sympathy in other people's interests may lead to matrimonial plans for their happiness. From Mrs. Barbauld's pleasure in writing of the engagements and marriages of her friends, it is possible that she made a good many of such plans for their benefit, though she was probably too wise or too cautious to carry them into action. We light upon some amusing passages in her letters on the subject. After mentioning various attacks made on her friends by the influenza, the fashionable complaint of her day as of ours, she says—

"I find I am filling my letter with nothing but ailments—I cannot help it, I had much rather tell you that people were all well and the young folks going to be married by dozens at a time and that we were very gay with balls and concerts and all manner of revelry! But if people are not gay and are not going to be married, and will be sick I am not answerable for it."

"I always tell young ladies of weddings when I hear of them, just to put them in mind that there are such things,"

she slily remarks in another letter.—She enjoys having a little joke at her nephew Charles' expense.

"What shall I say? you are not much of a politician and do not expect a place, otherwise I would give you joy of the new ministry. —I could tell you of Valentines and verses flying about our house, but as you are not in love *to my knowledge*, you would not care for them.—I could tell you of the lamentable situation of poor Charles, bereft of his love who is flown away to Yorkshire, (he does not eat I believe above two or three times a day) but then I know you consider him as an old batchelor and have no sympathy for him.—I will therefore content myself with telling you an old truth, that I am affec^{ly} yours

"A. L. BARBAULD.

"Stoke Newington, *Feb.* 18*th*."

Marriages amongst her neighbours or particular friends the Hoares, Powells, Estlins, Kinders, Enfields, Taylors, Reeves, Kenricks, naturally interest her most of all, and she writes of them with so much warm sympathy as to awaken ours in people

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we have never seen. Perhaps she may have been more inclined to the topic, from a shrewd suspicion that Lydia herself was likely before long to take a keen personal interest in it.

If so, her surmise was a correct one, as we shall soon see.

* * * * *

In 1806 the most important event in Lydia's life occurred. She and her mother left Hampstead to go and live at Birmingham, where she met and soon became engaged to William Withering.

Mrs. Barbauld's letters of congratulation to mother and daughter sound amusingly stilted to our modern ears, but they breathe a spirit of genuine affection. We should not write in the same style now, but we should not feel more warmly.

"Stoke Newington, *Nov.* 11*th*, 1807.

"My dear Mrs. R.

"You judge rightly in concluding that Mr. Barbauld and myself must feel the most lively interest in the communication we have just received from your friendship. We thank you very sincerely for your kindness in making it, and beg to congratulate you on having so much to your satisfaction concluded an affair which I am sure must have been the most anxiously trying to your feelings of any you have engaged in, since the disposal of your own hand. I never had the pleasure of personally knowing Dr. Withering but your intimacy with the family I was aware of, and it must be a most pleasing circumstance to you to dispose of the dear girl amongst your old and intimate connections. Still, my dear Madam, I enter entirely into your feelings which, let the connection be as agreeable as it may and the situation as near as it may, must suggest in some measure the idea of privation; to marry a daughter well is a joy no doubt to a fond mother, but it must be a weeping joy. To the object of your solicitation, to our dear Lydia, present our sincere congratulations and most ardent wishes for every blessing and every satisfaction that can attend the state into which she is preparing to enter; may the happy man who has won the possession of so valuable a heart, estimate it properly and use it kindly. As to waiting a twelvemonth, that may or may not be; my friend Mrs. John Taylor, with all her firmness and her resolves, found herself obliged to give up in the article of time, to the importunity of the lover. . . ."

"Stoke Newington, *Nov.* 30, 1807.

"My dear Lydia.

(For after some months I must not, you know, call you Lydia, and I love the name so well I am resolved to use it while I can,) I cannot satisfy my feelings without personally addressing you on a subject which must be near my heart, because it relates to the disposal of yours.

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How pleasing it must be to you to form the important connection you are going to form with the full approbation of your family and your dear parent, as well as your own decided inclination! Without both these I know you could not be happy and yet how seldom is it that both so cordially concur! Till this decisive engagement is taken, be the parent as indulgent and the daughter as dutiful as they may, they cannot be sure they shall not be called upon to sacrifice the peace of one or the other party. Tho' I have not the pleasure of knowing the gentleman who has been so happy as to obtain your regard, the celebrity of his father gives me naturally a respectable idea of the son, and makes me feel as if I half knew him. . . . Mr. Barbauld joins me, dear Lydia, in the most cordial wishes for your happiness in every scene of life, tried and untried; with affectionate respects to Mrs. R.

"I am ever Yours A. L. BARBAULD."

It is sad to have to turn from the happy letters from which we have been quoting, to those which tell of the most painful episode in Mrs. Barbauld's history. For while Lydia's prospects seemed to be brightening, her friend's were clouded by a sorrow, always one of the hardest to bear, and in her case hardest of all to her loving heart, from the distressing form it took. But sad as are the letters we have now to give, we would not have lost them from the correspondence, for they reveal all the nobility of Mrs. Barbauld's nature, her patience, her tenderness of affection, her courage, her acceptance of the heavy trial laid upon her—so that we admire her even more in adversity than in prosperity. We could not know or understand her so well without them.

A long letter from the nephew, Charles Aikin, first broke to Lydia the sad news of her friend's trouble. So violent, he says, had been the paroxysms with which Mr. Barbauld had been seized, that he had threatened both his own and his wife's life, and it had been necessary to put him under restraint for a time in his own house.

In the three touching letters which follow, Mrs. Barbauld tells the story of her sorrow; but shows how her own troubles do not make her forget to sympathize in Lydia's happiness.

"You and Mrs. R. I know well have too truly sympathized with me in my heavy affliction, to wonder at my not having addressed you by letter for some time past. Yet to such friends I should have written, but that I knew Charles had written you an account of our then situation; and I have now waited in hopes to give you a better account than you had at that time. And I *have* the satisfaction to tell you that my dear

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Mr. Barbauld is materially better, may I say well? in every particular but one. . . . He has been to see Cooke in the 'Man of the World' and was as much delighted as at any time he could have been, and has seen several of his friends. He is not at all low, neither at present is there any violence in his manner. Yet in one circumstance, most distressing to me, he is not materially altered. His alienation from me still continues, and has the appearance of being strongly fixed. O my dear Lydia! could you have thought when you last saw us, that I should ever have to lament the decay of affection in him who loved me so well? I do not feel less affection for him, for I know malady is alone the cause; but I feel wounded in the tenderest part, a part for which I had provided no armour; and what grieves me the most, is that I can be of no service to him. In any other calamity I could have soothed, attended, nurst him; in this, absence from him can alone have a chance of being serviceable. In a temporary absence however, I have great hopes; he is to go to Norwich to spend two or three months in lodgings there, and he will be there surrounded with kind friends. God grant a complete restoration! I know you love us so well, that I make no apology my dear Lydia, for thus clouding your opening prospects, when all with you ought to be joy and hope, with the sympathetic tear for your poor friends. But this is so mixed a state that we can none of us say, Here will I build my tabernacle and no sorrow shall come nigh me; and well is your pious mind aware, that all *stable* happiness must be looked for in a better state. . . ."

"I assure you I do all I can to keep up my spirits. My friends here are very kind to me; and hope, and employment of some sort or other enable me to get tolerably through the day; but there is a lonely and desolate feel in the evening, which sometimes I find it difficult to bear—but enough of this. God bless you, my dear Lydia and your dear Mother,

"I am hers and your obliged and affectionate, A. L. BARBAULD.

"*March*, 1808."

The next letter is to Mrs. R., thanking her for the "obliging attention of a piece of wedding-cake," telling her, "that the happy knot is at length tied." Her fervent wishes for the happiness of the young couple ring sadly in our ears, when we remember the sequel of Lydia's married life.

"As to my own prospects they are very dark at present. The absence of three months (a long time I thought it) has not had the effect which was hoped from it, in removing the unhappy alienation from me which has taken possession of his mind, and I fear I must at length be obliged to submit to the heart-breaking expedient of a

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separation. The state of irritation he is in when with me, evidently does him hurt; and if he is, which is certainly the case, much better at a distance from me, I must not any further attempt to keep him. You will, my dear friend, enter into my feelings sufficiently without my dwelling upon them.—On running over these sentences, I find I have said he and him, without mentioning Mr. Barbauld, but that is all one, it can require no explanation. . . . For myself it is now quite determined. My brother and Charles both say I must not return to my house while Mr. Barbauld is there. What plan I shall follow, where I shall be and where he will be, I know not yet. I shall endeavour to keep up my spirits as well as I can and must seek for something of employment and something of company, but I can form no scheme yet. I spent a day some time ago at Hampstead; it was a pleasant day, for it was at the Carrs; but I looked with a wistful eye at your former habitation, and wished, selfishly wished, that you were there still. . . . Miss Baillies are returned to their house, but poor Joanna does not look well at all. Farewel my dear Madam, Mr. Barbauld, if with me, would I know express his cordial regards and in that would still unite with Your ever affec^te^

"A. L. BARBAULD."

In a letter to the bride written about a month afterwards, the picture she gives of the desolation of her home is even more pathetic. She does not forget to begin by rejoicing in Lydia Withering's happiness, but her thoughts soon take a mournful turn again.

"Alas, my dear Friend," she writes, "it is only in carrying my thoughts out of myself and my own situation that I can now enjoy any happiness. Mrs. R. has no doubt told you that an arrangement for a separation has been found necessary between me, and I can scarce believe it, the person I have loved and still do love more than any other in the world, and whose tender affection to me, you have so often been witness to. I have been this week here at Parndon; when I return I shall in a few days be left alone, a solitary being in a large house, where everything will put me in mind of my lost companion. I hope in some way or other, to engage a companion that will prevent the utter solitude which I am sure I cannot bear; but the companion of more than thirty years, will he ever return? Alas! at present I see little prospect of it.—This is not like a congratulatory wedding-letter, but I cannot help it. You will naturally ask, where does Mr. Barbauld go? He will take for the present lodgings in London near Charles, and board with him, and I hope will spend his time pleasantly, for he is generally in good spirits and you never saw him more lively or enter-

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taining. . . . It is well for you that Mr. Smith will frank this letter, for I am sure it is not worth postage—all that it means to say is, to express my hopes that *Mrs. Withering* will from time to time remember with accustomed affection, the old friend and correspondent of *Lydia R.* Please to make my compliments acceptable to Mr. Withering and believe me

"ever, faithfully and affectionately Yours A. L. BARBAULD."

This letter, written in September 1808, is the last in the collection before the painful close of Mr. Barbauld's illness. Before the year was ended, the terrible news was brought to her that he had drowned himself in the New River. No wonder the shock to her mind was so great as to make writing impossible to her for some time. It must have been a help and comfort to her, when in the course of time she was again able to occupy her mind with her literary work—with her edition of the British Novelists, with its excellent essay on Fiction from the Earliest Times; with her poem on the King's illness, a subject that must have come sadly home to her own mind; and her political and social poem on the year 1811—a passage in which, we may mention by the way, is said to have suggested to Macaulay the oft-quoted New Zealander.

More than a year passed before Lydia received another letter from her; but when she hears that the young friend, of whom she was so fond, was herself in trouble from her mother's illness, she at once writes to express her sympathy. And a still more tender and affectionate letter follows, when she hears soon after of the death of Mrs. R.

It is pleasant to find the tone of the remaining letters becoming more cheerful as time went on. Mrs. Barbauld's mind was too healthy to allow painful thoughts to take up their abode in it, and poison all the blessings that remained to her. Her books, her writing, her friends and relations, especially perhaps those of a generation younger than herself—for Mrs. Barbauld always understood and loved young people—supplied her with many interests. And soon we read of her pleasure in having various young ladies to stay with her; a Miss Martineau, a charming Miss Fletcher from Edinburgh, and Miss Sarah Taylor. The letters are so happy and pleasant and interesting, that we would gladly give all, if space allowed; but we must content ourselves with a few quotations.

"I am much pleased," she writes, "with a young friend whom I have in the house with me at present—a daughter of Mr. Peter

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Martineau's. She is gentle, amiable, diligent, remarked by all who see her for sweetness of disposition and property of manners, and often put me in mind—Guess of whom?

"Have you got my Neice's * Poem yet at Birmingham? You will see it no doubt, and I have as little doubt will be pleased with it. She has recieved * many compliments upon it already. The subject, 'On the character of Women' is delicate and requires management, but she has taken great care not to make assumptions or say anything which a man jealous for the superiority of his sex (which you know Mr. Withering all you men are,) can reasonably object to."

From what we gather about Mr. Withering and the homage exacted by him from his meek little wife, he certainly must have pleaded guilty to her charge! In her next letter she writes—

"Your letter would now have been answered sooner, but that I have had a young lady [Sarah Taylor] in the house, and have also spent some days at Hampstead. I was at Miss Baillie's, as well as Miss Fletcher, a young lady from Edinburgh, who as perhaps you know has been resident with me this winter and who by the way is an extremely pretty girl and very sweet and amiable in every respect. They made me go to a party at Mrs. Milligan's, Roslin House. . . where there was a dance for the young folks, not children but just above; the blossoming age, lovely fifteen and sixteen, with roses not yet breathed upon by the contaminating air of London drawing-rooms and public places. Mrs. Carr brought her three eldest and a very pretty niece to the dance; and if she felt proud, I can excuse her. There was one indeed of a maturer age, Mrs. P——, who being freed from the trammels of Quakerism, danced all the evening apparently with much pleasure to herself and to her father, still a Quaker, who sat by . . . I took a melancholy walk along Church Row, where now there is not a single person I know, or a single door at which I could knock. I drank tea at Mrs. Slater's where we talked of you, and where I met two very good friends of yours, Mr. and Mrs. Ware.—Well, I think I have no other excursion to tell you of, except that Miss Fletcher and I (for without the inducement of taking her I am sure I should not have gone) saw a French Play acted at Dr. Marcett's by French emigrants. The Play was Racine's 'Berenice' and it was very well acted, an advantage that Play requires to render it interesting, for you may recollect that it has neither incident nor catastrophe; there is no change of fortune. . . In short the Play could never have sustained itself, but for the sweetness of the verse, some charming lines which everybody repeats, and the allusions,

* Even the highly-educated Mrs. Barbauld finds a little difficulty sometimes about the order of her vowels.

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which at the time were well understood, to the loves of Louis XIV. and Mary Mancini."

"Stoke Newington, *Feb*^{y}, 1812.

"My niece is just returned from Edinburgh, where she has been spending the winter with that charming family, the Fletchers;—Miss Fletcher is come home and come out, as they call it, and from the variety of company she has seen there, has brought home a number of anecdotes which she relates with her usual humour and vivacity. I understand Mrs. Hamilton is about some new work, I believe relative to education. I wonder whether any family has been better educated, for all that has been written on that subject. If I were to look for a family where a good style of education prevailed, I should seek it where there was good sense, a knowledge of the world as it really is, and no very peculiar opinions—and such indeed is the spirit of Mrs. Hamilton's works, and they are good because there is not much of system in them. —I trust the next generation may see our poor better educated. Is it not a disgrace to our wealthy nation, that a much greater proportion of the population of Ireland can read, than of this country?—I was yesterday in the company of a gentleman who has been making a tour in Greece. We were amused by hearing that many of our books, and amongst others 'the Vicar of Wakefield,' are translated into modern Greek, and that Homer himself is translated into modern Greek and (what an exclamation Mr. Withering makes!) in *rhyme*. The vale of Tempe he was charmed with, but the fields of Enna (for he went to Sicily) have no flowers; I suppose Proserpine gathered them all.—You have by this time, I doubt not, read and admired Miss Baillie's new Vol. of Plays. Her fine mind, her poetical genius, her delicate touches of all the chaste sensibilities of the heart, are equally conspicuous in this as in all former works. I think 'The Beacon' stands the best chance of being acted, of any in this Vol., for the passion of fear is not so pleasing a one for delineation as many others.—Of Miss Seward's letters, I think exactly as you do. She had certainly a great deal of real talent; pity it was so disgraced by affectation. What hurts one most in the letters is the idea that on occasions the most affecting, as the illness of her Father, the death of her sister, she took copies of her letters with a view to print them. I am told however that they have been retouched and burnished, so as to be pretty different from those her correspondents really received, many personalities have also been suppressed. Mr. Edgeworth, I understand, when he heard of the intended publication, wrote a letter threatening vengeance if his name was introduced in any way. Accordingly it is not, tho' I have no doubt it was often to be found in the originals with many a bitter comment. I do not think Scott's last publication worthy of him, tho' evidently it could be written by none but a Poet. The great fault is that the beginning

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has nothing to do with the end. If he wanted to celebrate the battles of Busaco and Albuera he should have written a Campaign as Addison did, and not have begun with Don Roderick and his vision. You ask me if I like Campbell's 'Gertrude.' It is an elaborate Poem, beautiful verse, and perhaps satisfies better on the second reading than the first, for the story is rather confused . . . . I heard somebody say that you had it in contemplation to come to London this spring; I wish it may be true, because I think you will not forget Newington, on account of the pleasure that seeing you both will give to, your affectionate

"A. L. BARBAULD."

"Stoke Newington, *May*, 1813.

"I am impatient for the pleasure of seeing you, which I hope you will indulge me in as soon as you conveniently can, and a very great pleasure indeed it will be to renew the intercourse which once was so frequent with you, and to improve the acquaintance with Mr. Withering which was commenced by the glimpse you were so good as to give me of him soon after your marriage. London is particularly full at present. I do not often venture into its crowded streets, the bustle of which is now particularly disagreeable to me; but I was drawn there the other day by a strong inducement, the meeting Miss Edgeworth, who with her father and his fourth wife, a handsome and very agreeable woman, are now in London. Miss E.'s merit is now universally known and properly appreciated and her door is in a manner besieged with admirers. She brings with her a story of three Volumes which is to be printed this summer. I know no lady who at present stands so high in the public esteem, except perhaps Hannah More in a certain set. A very large set however; M^e^. de Stael, a star also of the first magnitude, will soon shed her brilliancy upon the London circles. I suppose she is the most eloquent woman now existing . . . . The most fashionable amusement now in London seems to be Mrs. Siddons' readings. She has very wisely made her tickets a guinea, and those who did not care for going when they might see her in the boxes for six shillings and the play properly got up with all its accompaniments, are glad to crowd to the *Argyle Rooms* where she gets five or six hundred pounds a night for reading. A little coquetry with the public succeeds very well. It is true in this case you have the advantage of having no inferior actors to take the illusion off, and finer modulations of her fine voice than the size of our large theatres will allow . . . . There is an Exhibition open at present of the late Sir Joshua Reynolds' paintings, which the proprietors with great liberality have sent for exhibition. I was much gratified to see so many fine pieces together; tho' as to many of them which I had seen as they came out in all their freshness and beauty, such was their faded appearance that it was like seeing a beauty whom one had known in her bloom, after she was grown sallow and withered.

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That objection however does not apply to his *Ugolini*, where the ghastly appearance of the whole group is quite in unison with the state of the picture—West has another large painting exhibiting at his house, *Christ before Pilate* but neither is this, I understand, to go to America.—Have you seen a new Poem of Montgomery's? *The World before the Flood.* Room enough you will say for imagination. You will be pleased with many parts which are finely wrought, particularly the Death of Adam . . . .

"With sincere affection and esteem Yours A. L. BARBAULD."

"Stoke Newington, *June* 1814.

"Is it possible that you have been sitting quietly at the Larches, while all the world have been staring at Emperors and Kings; and all the young Ladies and others not young, at both which I feel very indignant, crowding to beg a kiss from that whiskered old fellow Blucher?—And then the fireworks, and the Roundabouts, and gingerbread stalls in the park, and the cockleshell fleet in the Serpentine river.—Will not these bring you up? And now the cry is, The poor princess! shut up, deprived of pen and ink, as ill-treated as Miss Clarissa Harlow! Will no knight in black armour and plumed helmet, appear to deliver her from durance vile?—Charming subjects these, for gossipping tea-tables. I think there is this difference between London and the Country, that in the country different parties talk of different subjects, according to their tastes and their connections; but in London you may be sure if you enter into twenty companies, that they are all talking of the same thing, the event of the day . . . .

"Your faithful and affte A. L. BARBAULD."

In former letters Mrs. Barbauld had expressed her weariness of the strife and bloodshed into which the ambition of Napoleon Buonaparte had plunged Europe. In the two next she writes, amongst other things, of the *fêtes* and rejoicings with which the much-desired peace was celebrated, and gives no quarter to the selfish Emperor, who had so long driven it away.

After some messages about Dr. Withering the botanist, to Lydia's husband, she asks—

"And now with what else . . . shall I fill my letter? Will it please you to hear that all the world will be in the park to morrow? Yes; for tho' you would not come up yourself for all these fine sights, you will enjoy the pleasure of others; but you will pity my sister and myself when I tell you we were obliged to refuse a delightful invitation to see it from a house in the park, because all the coaches had been engaged days and weeks beforehand.

"Shall I tell you, or have you heard that Dr. Holland is appointed

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Physician to the Princess of Wales, with a handsome salary and they are speedily to set out on their travels? It is a very pretty situation for a young man of that profession, but his friends laugh and tell him he must take care of his *character*. The Princess means to winter at Naples. . . Well, the grand fête is gone off and as far as I understand without accident, except that the Chinese Pagoda on the bridge, which it seems was intended should be permanent, blew up without leave and endangered a man who was within. I understand from those who were there both yesterday and to-day that notwithstanding that all London was invited and that all London seemed to be there, there was no shouting, no rudeness, no disposition to riot; everybody seemed amused and happy yet no public feeling seemed to be raised; the joy for peace was much short of the sensation produced by the peace of Amiens. Indeed the feeling had had time to wear off. . . I will say no more but that I am dear Mrs. Withering,

"Your obliged and affectionate A. L. BARBAULD."

In the letter which follows, dated January 1815, she enters with warm interest into the Witherings' scheme of travelling.

"The French," she says, "will have learned what sort of comforts Englishmen expect and the inns will have provided accordingly. I have been travelling too. I have been ascending Chimborazo with Humboldt, crossing a rapid river upon a bridge of ropes and making myself dizzy with looking down from precipices formed by two mountains which have been rent asunder. It does great credit to Helen Williams to have translated such a book. The greater part of it is too scientific for me; but these scenes of wild nature Humbolt makes me feel, for he describes them as a man who felt them himself.—I have just been reading *The Lord of the Isles*, and lamenting that the expensive manner of printing at present in fashion, and the high price given for Quarto poems, tempts so many of our poets to write themselves down. I think you can hardly name one who has not rather lessened than increased his fame by his last performance. The scene in the hut of the Banditti, and the death of Allan, and the quarrel at the nuptial feast, are however striking; but I can hardly think verses poured out with such rapidity will go down to posterity *along* with those of Pope or Milton."

After a little neighbourly gossip about "some matches," which had been broken off and "and where the parties are not likely to solder together again," she makes her attack on Napoleon.

"Thanks for your entertaining account of the Lion in his den. How

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that man can bear to be *shown* and questioned and stared at after what he has been, I cannot conceive !—If he had a good conscience indeed, —Oh ! then he might encounter the scrutinizing glance and the eager stare and lose none of his dignity ; but for him, What, as Lord Byron says, must be *the madness of his memory !* I am glad you are among people who rejoice in peace. This place is full of nothing but Stock-jobbers and Insurance brokers, and I am indignant at seeing how little they regard the misery of a whole continent in comparison with their petty gains. But have we peace? there seems to be a great deal to settle yet at Vienna. . . .

"Believe me ever, Your faithful and affectionate, A. L. BARBAULD."

* * * * * *

With this letter ends the correspondence of twenty years—a correspondence, which from many allusions scattered here and there amongst the letters, had given the greatest pleasure to both the writers. The later letters especially abound in expressions of sympathy with Lydia, interest in all that concerns her, and delight in hearing from her. She is impatient for the pleasure of seeing her. It gives her "particular pleasure" to receive her letters, "for believe me, my dear Mrs. Withering," she writes, "I value very highly the kind expressions of your affection, and would not on any account neglect a correspondence which is truly dear to me."

After Lydia's marriage, Mrs. Barbauld begins her letters, "My dear Mrs. Withering," as she thinks she ought no longer to call her Lydia, "the name I love so well,"—but old associations are too strong for her, and we find her dropping into the Christian name before she has written many lines.

Though no record of her feelings on the subject of Lydia's distressing illness remains, there needs none to tell us of the deep sorrow—all the deeper from the painful experience she had gone through in her own home—with which she must have heard of it from Mr. Withering, not long after the last-quoted letter had been written.

That even in poor Lydia Withering's malady the remembrance of the happiness which Mrs. Barbauld's friendship had once given her, did not for a long time fade from her mind, is shown in a touching extract from Mr. Withering's diary, eleven years later. . . . He says—

"I showed her, 'Mrs. Barbauld's Legacy.' She looked into it saying, '*I loved her !*'"

E. C. RICKARDS.

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LADY BETTY'S BALL-GOWN.

BY DOROTHY F. BLOMFIELD.

I.

LADY BETTY was at once the pride, the despair and the envy of the county in which it had pleased Providence to place her. When I add that that county was Huntshire, unrivalled in the annals of sport and beauty, the full force of the above statement will be properly appreciated. Lady Betty Wray, the most beautiful *débutante* of her year, had lost her heart in her first season to that noted sportsman and too fascinating detrimental, the Honourable Ronald Wincaunton. Everybody knows now why she refused the two great catches of the day, the Duke of Northlands and Septimus Rhino, the American millionaire, not to speak of less pretentious aspirants; but at the time her people, Lord and Lady Windermere, were in despair. The Earl could give Lady Betty at best but a poor couple of hundred pounds a year in dower, and if Lord Mendip could match it in an allowance to his son, it was about all he could do. Things looked black, indeed, for the unfortunate lovers, when suddenly Fortune smiled upon the Honourable Ronald in a way she seldom does upon younger sons. A rich and childless aunt died in the very nick of time, leaving all her money to her nephew, who lost not a day in securing the hand of his lady-love. Lady Betty had never regretted her choice; her husband adored her and her three lovely children, and she adored them. Every one admitted that the Wincauntons were a model couple, whose devotion to each other had not, however, at all dulled the fine edge of their social capacities. They made a most delightful host and hostess, Lady Betty's grace and charm softening a dignity of manner and purity of mind that might otherwise have been alarmingly severe.

Young and lovely as she was, entering with spirit into all the gaieties natural to her age and station, no breath of scandal had ever clouded her fair fame. She was the standard by which the

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county society measured itself. Did you venture to set up your tents in Huntshire, the first question your neighbours would ask was, "Has Lady Betty called on Mrs. A.?" and if she had called, the county would open its arms and take you to its bosom with fluttering warmth. Lady Betty's acquaintance with you was, so to speak, your seal of respectability. You are not, however, to suppose that the Wincauntons set themselves up as judges of their neighbours. They were too simple-minded for that,—but they had their idea of what is meant by the term "gentlepeople," and it must frankly be confessed that it was a little out of date. Risky jokes fell flat in Lady Betty's drawing-room, and doubtful flirtations did not flourish under her roof; nevertheless, she was a most popular woman. The men put this down to her beauty and sweetness of nature, the women to her exquisite manners and still more exquisite dress. There was no doubt that Lady Betty carried the art of dressing to absolute perfection, and in this she was ably seconded by her maid, Mademoiselle Josephine Roche.

Josephine might indeed be described as the crown to the many gifts which Fortune had showered upon her mistress; she made all her gowns, and neither for love nor money would she have betrayed the secret of those wonders of cut and finish. Lady Betty had one great weakness—she loved distinction in her toilette. No one had ever dared to copy her gowns—Josephine would have scornfully told you that it was impossible to do so!—and no one ever knew what they would be like till they were put on. It was one of the local excitements to see what Lady Betty Wincaunton would wear at this race meeting, or that ball. Two such events were at the moment the all-important topics of conversation in the county,—the Splashmore Race-meeting, which had just taken place, and the Midlington Ball, still to come off, where birth, beauty, dollars and diamonds flocked together as they do nowhere else out of town.

"That was an adorable frock you wore at the races, Betty," sighed Lady Dawlish, a distant connection and near neighbour of the Wincauntons, as she settled herself luxuriously down to her tea, with an air of exhausted felicity. She was a pretty little fluffy-haired American, who had caught Lord Dawlish's rather vagrant fancy some two years before, and who had succeeded in retaining it and regaining the affectionate tolerance of his people. She had a genius for gossip, which she cultivated with the finish and piquancy of a Frenchwoman; but she was a kind-hearted

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little soul at bottom, and erred through want of thought rather than want of heart. Lady Betty at once disapproved of her and loved her; Virginia Dawlish admired Lady Betty more than any other living creature.

"An adorable frock, dear," she repeated, sipping her tea daintily between her sentences, "so simple and severe and white, and so exactly suited to your Saint Elizabeth sort of air! There wasn't another woman on the ground who could have stood up in it without looking a fright. It was too sweet for words on you though. Oh! and, my dear, *did* you see the Brooke woman"—Lady Dawlish was nothing if not irrelevant——"carrying on with that wicked, handsome-looking cousin—the man in the Guards? I forget his name; but Daw"—she always called her husband "Daw"—"knows him and says he is about as bad as they make them."

A pained look came into Lady Betty's lovely grey eyes. She lifted them quickly from her tea-table and gazed anxiously at Virginia.

"I saw her walking about with him several times; but, Virginia, you don't think there is any harm in it? He is her cousin, remember, and I am sure our cousins were just like brothers. And I don't suppose she has the least idea that he is bad—how should she? I couldn't bear to think any harm of Juliet Brooke; I was always so fond of her at school and so sorry for her. I feel ashamed that I haven't seen more of her since she came into this part of the world."

"I forgot she was your friend. But now, Betty, I'd just like to know what you see in her. Of course I know she is the prettiest woman in the place, barring yourself, and if you were that sort of woman, you ought to like her as a foil. Her wonderful golden hair and her blue eyes set off your masses of black waves and your great dark eyes to perfection. But when you've granted her beauty, and only an outside kind of beauty, mind!—you have intellect and heart in your face, my sweet Bet—I don't see what in the world you see to care about. Besides, she's *bourgeoise*, for all her slim figure and small hands and feet, and pretty pink and white skin. I'm a better bred-looking woman than she is, and I don't set up for being the real genuine article like you and Dawlish."

"You are good enough for us and for Dawlish," remarked Lady Betty, with an amused smile, taking advantage of the moment's pause in Lady Dawlish's vehement talk; "but I like

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Juliet for herself. She has a weak nature, and she isn't overburdened with brains, but she is very loving and very lovable, and very true to her friends. I never heard her say an unkind word of any one; and if only Mr. Brooke understood her better, I'm sure they would be happy. Juliet is the sort of person who can't live without caressing affection."

"Well, there isn't much of the caresser about Mr. Brooke, anyway. I never saw such a self-contained, set sort of man," interposed Lady Dawlish, helping herself to another piece of muffin as an assistance to conversation. "I don't suppose he does understand her, and still less does she understand him. He has depths, that man, and will enough to do anything. Theoretically, of course, women worship his type—cool, calm, and masterful; but I guess it wouldn't be all beer and skittles when it came to practice—to living with it, I mean."

"Perhaps not; but I like what I have seen of Mr. Brooke. I like his dignity and self-respect, his splendid head and his strong north-country voice and manner. It is like a breath of air from the moors."

"I suppose he's as rich as Crœsus?" said Lady Dawlish.

"I believe he has something like £60,000 a year. He made his money in coals or iron—I forget which—and he bought this place, Beechfields, to please Juliet, who is so fond of hunting. He doesn't hunt himself, which is a pity, I think."

"A great pity," rejoined Virginia, flicking some stray crumbs off her Mechlin ruffles with a slender finger-tip, and speaking in a tone pregnant with meaning.

Lady Betty made an uneasy movement; she disliked innuendoes.

"It would be nicer if he rode with her," she remarked tentatively.

"It would stop people's tongues," amended Lady Dawlish, "and might drive the '*beau sabreur*' from the field, literally and figuratively. He may be a cousin, but he's a lover too, and for your pretty friend's sake it is to be wished that he hadn't taken a fancy to pursue the pleasures of the chase in Huntshire. It looks bad, even in these lax days, to be escorted about everywhere by an old lover while your husband never shows. He has put up his man and horses and himself—worse luck!—at the Midlington Arms, so he is quite handy to his dear cousins. Mr. Brooke must either be a great innocent, or a great fool. He wasn't with them at the races, and I didn't like the cousin's air

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of triumph and her wretched, furtive look. You may depend on it, my dear," added Lady Dawlish, shaking an impressive little forefinger, "that girl is on the edge of a precipice, and people are beginning to give her the cold shoulder and shove her over. It's a nice little way they have! Why don't you interfere, Betty? I would if I knew her as well as you do, but it ain't my business."

"It's a delicate, dangerous thing for any one to interfere in such a case," sighed Lady Betty; "oh! I hope we are wrong about it, Virnie!"

"So do I, sweet Betty, devoutly; but anyway as I said, it's no business of mine, and I must go, or Daw will be on the war-path! Good-bye, you nice thing," she cried, as she raised herself on tip-toe to hug her stately cousin, and then with a murmur of talk and a sharp little silken rustle, left the room and drove off in her perfect little pony-carriage.

Lady Betty sank back in her chair again as the door closed, and gave a weary sigh. She longed to be able to give the lie to Virginia's suspicions of Mrs. Brooke; to her pure, sensitive soul it was little short of torture to have to think evil of any one she loved, and yet she felt the truth of the old proverb, "There is no smoke without a fire." She remembered Juliet's tendency to sentimentality in their school-days, the extraordinary power that mere physical beauty had over her, and trembled for the weak, soft creature. She had always puzzled over Juliet's marriage, for John Brooke fulfilled none of the conditions Juliet required of the man of her heart. He was no longer in his first youth, and though to an observant eye the power in the sternly-set face and figure were more attractive than the orthodox chiselled features, curling hair and languishing eyes of the school-girl's ideal, Juliet was not the person to have found it so. His manner matched his face—curt, decided, honest and unpolished—repellent to the superficial critic, though here again the student of human nature would have detected with interest, latent chivalry and unsuspected warmth of heart. Lady Betty imagined that he had been attracted by Juliet's beauty and had soon tired of it, and that she had succumbed to the fascination of his wealth. She was the daughter of a poor officer of respectable family, who had been put to school by a wealthy middle-class relative of her mother's, in order that she might make a good match, or, failing that, get a superior situation as a governess. It was while on a visit to this relation, who lived on the outskirts of a large

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manufacturing town, that Juliet Vincy had met John Brooke. She had not long left school—she was barely twenty when she married; and with the exception of letters relative to the engagement and the sending and acknowledging of wedding presents, Lady Betty had heard nothing of her old school-fellow till she turned up as a resident in the same neighbourhood. Every one had followed the Wincauntons' lead and had called on the new-comers. The men liked Mr. Brooke, in spite of the coal and his non-hunting tastes—manliness always makes its way in the world—but the women were less easy to please with his wife. She was too pretty and too pleasure-loving to escape censure, but Beechlands was just too far off for Lady Betty to see her former friend very intimately, or often, and, as gossip did not find favour with her, Lady Dawlish's insinuations came as a painful revelation of public feeling.

II.

Lady Betty made up her mind, which had been harassed with doubt and anxiety ever since Lady Dawlish's visit, and set off to call on Mrs. Brooke, hoping that Providence might grant her an opening for a word of gentle advice. But her good intentions were doomed to futility by the announcement of the butler that his mistress was out riding, and might not be in till late, nor were her fears lessened on learning that Captain Vincy had gone with her, and that Mr. Brooke was from home and was not expected back till Friday. Lady Betty could have wrung her hands in despair; to-day was Tuesday; what might not happen in three days? At least Juliet's imprudence would but drive one more nail into the coffin of her good name. A happy thought struck Lady Betty; she asked for pen and paper, and wrote a hasty line to Mrs. Brooke, begging her to come to Wincaunton Court for the few days that she was alone, and giving it to the butler, bade him be sure and deliver it at once to his mistress. The same evening brought a messenger from Beechlands with Mrs. Brooke's warm thanks and excuses—none of them very weighty—for not availing herself of dear Betty's kind invitation.

For the next few days the flood-gates of gossip were opened upon poor Lady Betty; no matter where she went, no matter who she entertained or visited, she was met by Juliet's name at every turn, handled with various degrees of disapproval or con-

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demnation. But if Betty Wincaunton was a fastidious woman, she was also a great-hearted and faithful one. She met questions and innuendoes with a cold, dignified reserve which put the questioner, and not Lady Betty and Mrs. Brooke, in the wrong. This so far shook one or two of her warmest admirers that they began to reconsider their harsh judgment of their pretty neighbour, and might have done much to stay the growth of scandal, had it not culminated in the report that Mrs. Brooke had at last justified the public opinion of her by running away with Captain Vincy on the very day her husband was expected home.

Lady Dawlish broke the news to Lady Betty. "You see, my dear, I was right," she said, not without a spice of unchristian pleasure in the verification of her prophecy.

Lady Betty was standing by the mantelpiece, and as the firelight fell upon her beautiful face, Virginia saw that it was as white as a sheet.

"Betty," she began with eager anxiety; "don't! she isn't worth it, darling! She——" Lady Betty turned, and laying her head against the fireplace, burst into a passion of tears.

"You don't understand," she wailed. "Oh! it is dreadful, dreadful! I won't believe it! My poor little Juliet! I can see her now, so sweet and gentle, sitting with me in our darkened bedroom, while the others were out enjoying themselves—I used to have such fearful headaches at school, Virnie—and she would sit for hours quite still, or pouring scent on my head till I grew better. The kindest, dearest little creature!"

The words came broken with sobs, touching even Lady Dawlish's lighter nature. She rose from her easy-chair, and winding her arm round Lady Betty's waist, drew her down into an oak settle that stood by the fire, and kissed and stroked her cheek in silence.

"Dear Virnie," murmured her cousin, "you are too good and kind! Do try and think the best of Julie, and say all you can for her till we know the worst for an absolute certainty. There may be some mistake."

"So there may," conceded Virginia, with suspicious alacrity, "and to please you, my Betty, I am prepared to swear that your Mrs. Brooke is an angel of innocence!"

"I must go over to-morrow and try and see her," said Lady Betty. She was too much in earnest to notice Lady Dawlish's flippant little lift of the eye-brows.

"Go, by all means," the latter rejoined.

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But before the next afternoon Mr. Wincaunton had given his wife a modified version of the story which was too circumstantial to be disbelieved. It seemed that Mrs. Brooke had actually flown with her cousin and had accidentally encountered her husband on their way up to town. Mr. Brooke had brought his wife back, and Captain Vincy had continued his journey, with, presumably, no likelihood of return.

"You had better postpone your call, Betty," Ronald had remarked, drily, and on second thoughts Lady Betty decided to take his advice. The fact that the sinner was her friend did not lessen the sin in her eyes, but she resolutely declined to discuss the matter, even with Lady Dawlish. It was a nine days' wonder for the rest of the neighbourhood, and then it died away in the excitement of preparation for the Midlington Ball, to be held in another ten days' time; not, however, before society had decided to "cut" Mrs. Brooke.

Meanwhile Lady Betty suffered acutely. Never before had her personal affections come into open conflict with her principles. She had ideas on the subject of womanly dignity and purity, which, alas! seem to be fast growing obsolete, or at best talked of as "strait-laced." To her simple whiteness of soul, the fact that Juliet had returned to her husband in no way lessened the horror she felt at the sin she had committed against him. Had she been a stranger to her, or a mere acquaintance, she would not have had a doubt. She would have regretted the necessity of expunging the delinquent from the list of her friends and neighbours, but she would have done it without a moment's hesitation. But this was so different! She loved Juliet, in spite of her weaknesses, or rather because of them, though she could not have reasoned out this inconsistency, and she knew that Juliet loved her. She must seem to break faith with her old friend, or give up her most deeply-rooted principles and practice.

She was at the height of misery and indecision, when a message was brought to her in her boudoir from Mr. Brooke.

"Might he have a few moments' conversation with her?"

It was twelve o'clock, and Lady Betty was not in the habit of receiving morning callers. She hesitated.

"Did Mr. Brooke wish to see Mr. Wincaunton?" she asked.

"No, my lady, he asked for your ladyship," replied the butler respectfully.

"Very well; you can show Mr. Brooke up, Mercer, and let your master know he is here."

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"Master is out, my lady."

"Then let him know when he comes in."

The servant withdrew, and Lady Betty rose to face the situation; her heart was beating painfully; she felt sure this was no ordinary visit. But John Brooke, as he walked into the room, saw nothing of her agitation. He was aware of but one fact, that here was a most good and lovely woman, and the only woman who had power to help him in his trouble. He looked ten years older than when Lady Betty had last seen him, and the haunting wretchedness of his eyes drove the tears into her own. She moved towards him, and laid her slender hand in his.

"You want to see me?" she said in her clear, sweet voice.

"I want to talk to you for a few minutes alone, if I may. I don't want to be interrupted. It's a matter of life and death to me."

The note of suffering in his voice went to Lady Betty's heart.

"There's no fear of our being disturbed," she said kindly; "this is my quiet hour that I can count on having all to myself."

Mr. Brooke made no apology for breaking in upon his hostess's privacy, he was too deeply agitated for conventionalities to appeal to him. He refused the arm-chair she offered him, and turned abruptly to her.

"Lady Betty, I want to tell you a story; have you the patience to listen to it?"

Lady Betty murmured an assent, and fixed her lovely troubled eyes upon his worn face. She was profoundly interested in what he had to say; she interrupted him with no useless comment, but her very presence breathed the sympathy that was filling her soul.

"I will make it as short as I can," he said, with a dreary smile. "I am a coal merchant, a man of the people, but I was the son of one of the best women God ever made. Thank God, she died years ago! I was brought up—in a stern fashion I suppose people would call it nowadays—with old-fashioned ideas of purity and honour. Duty was the mainspring of the conduct and lives of the women about me, and you mayn't believe it, Lady Betty, but I never came in contact with an unworthy or a light woman till after I married. You know how I met Juliet, and what she was when I met her; the sweetest creature I had ever seen."

He stopped for command over his voice; memories too deep for words threatened his self-control pitifully.

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"Lady Betty," he went on reverently, "I can never tell you—I don't want even to try and tell you, it would seem like profanation—how I worshipped Juliet then, and how I love her now! But I never understood her; I know now that I never understood her. I only knew one sort of woman, the woman like my mother, calm, dignified, loving deeply, but not given to much demonstration of affection. I didn't know the woman who wants her husband to remain her lover not only in his heart and thoughts, but in outward expression. Juliet is that kind of woman, and I never guessed it. I never realized that my silence and reticence would seem to her coldness, or loss of love. I suppose I froze the love in her, frightened her, in short, for she began to avoid me, and lost all her pretty little endearing ways. Then he—that scoundrel!"—the words hissed through his teeth and his face grew more set and stern—"he came on to the scene. I never suspected! he was her cousin, and I overlooked the fact that she was weak, and that I was leaving her to herself—fool that I was! I went away on business for a few days; I was more miserable than I can say. I loved her too much for my peace of mind, and yet I felt I was losing her heart, even if I had ever had it, which I began to doubt. I doubted most things, but I never doubted her faith. I was unexpectedly called to London, and went direct up from my place of business. I got out of the train at Bletchley and came straight upon my wife and that—that man. My God! I shall never forget it! I knew how it was in a second. I walked up to her and took her by the arm, quite gently—I don't know why I didn't kill her—and led her away. I even asked her if she had any luggage. She was too frightened to speak, but she shook her head. There was a down train going at that moment, and I put her into it and got in myself. She never once looked at him, and he made no attempt to follow her. If he had,"—his voice sent a thrill of fear to Lady Betty's heart—"if he had, I would have killed him. When the train had got out of the station she came across the carriage and fell at my feet like a dead creature. I think I must have turned to stone, for I heard her sobbing there, words that hadn't any meaning for me. At last I realized that she was telling me she had only wronged me in intention, never by any deed except this flight. 'You had given up caring for me, and I was so frightened of you, and I wanted some one to love me. If you had only loved me a little, I would never have listened to him,' she kept on saying, and I sat and looked at her and never said a

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word, bad or good. I think at last she grew desperate, for she cried out, 'Oh! don't you see I love you, only you, John, only you never cared!' She was speaking the truth, thank God! whatever faults she may have, falsehood is not one of them. I knew she was speaking the truth, Lady Betty, and something seemed to give way in my heart, and I stooped down and picked her up, and she lay in my arms like a child. From that moment it was right with us."

His voice broke, and he stopped and looked at Lady Betty; she was crying softly.

"Lady Betty," he went on, "I believe her, but the world won't. Won't! what am I saying?" he cried passionately, "it must, it shall believe her. I want your help to make it. You know your power with these people; help me to save Juliet's name from them! It kills me that any one should think evil of her; but if I took her away it would do no good, the story would cling to her still. Don't say you don't believe her, you won't help her!"

Lady Betty had risen, and was standing before him; the tears were running down her cheeks. He took her hands in his and held them in his firm grasp. "You are a good, pure woman, and Juliet loves you. She is so young and so alone, she has no mother, no sister, no child; help her, for pity's sake!"

"I will go to her to-day, and if it is in my power to save her I will do it. Her good name is as dear to me as my own," cried Lady Betty.

John Brooke looked at the beautiful, noble face for a moment, then stooped down and pressed the hands he held in his reverently to his lips.

"God bless you!" he said simply.

III.

"Daw," remarked Lady Dawlish on the morning of the ball at breakfast, "do you know they say that Betty Wincaunton was seen driving with Juliet Brooke yesterday!"

"You don't say so!" ejaculated her husband, looking up from his coffee. "Then I suppose we were all wrong about Mrs. Brooke," he added, simply.

Virginia gazed at him for a moment in wide-eyed astonishment, which gradually gave way to an expression of admiration and amusement.

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"Dawlish," she cried, solemnly, "you are just too sweet for anything, and I must kiss you!"

She fluttered round the table, looking like a soft summer cloud in her white breakfast gown, and perching herself on Lord Dawlish's knee, took his long, brown face between her dainty little hands and kissed it fervently. He returned the embrace with a hug and a look of gratified embarrassment.

"I'm flattered by your approbation, my love, but I don't see what I've said to arouse it."

"Why, Daw, you don't mean to tell me that you think that woman is innocent just because Betty was seen with her?"

"Well, don't you see, Virnie, Betty isn't the sort of woman to make a mistake of that kind; if she's a friend of any one it's a sort of guarantee of their respectability. If I lost faith in Betty's judgment, I should be all at sea."

"And then they say there is no real power in consistent goodness!" cried Virginia, getting off her husband's knee; "for my part I don't believe it was Betty who was driving with her; I pin my faith every bit as firmly to her as you do, only I ought to be jealous that you think so much more of her than you do of me!" She said this in a tone of infantine reproach, and made a delightful little pout at him as he caught her by the arm and drew her down to him.

"You suit me best, little woman. I admire Betty awfully, but I should have been afraid of her, bless you!"

"All the same," sighed Virginia, "I wish I were more like her; and oh!" she continued with characteristic irrelevance, "I wish I knew what she was going to wear at the ball! I did ask her, and she said 'Something white!' So unsatisfactory! White means anything, from a drabbly tulle to a perfect dream of loveliness."

"Well, I reckon she'll take the shine out of some of you, anyway," drawled Dawlish, as he left the table.

"I hope you don't think you are talking American?" asked Lady Dawlish, scornfully.

"No, my love; only Virginian," and with a duck of the head to avoid the napkin-ring his wife indignantly flung after him, his lordship made a laughing escape to the study.

Virginia withdrew upstairs to take another look at her own gown for the great event. It was the creation of a celebrated Parisian *artiste*—it would be an insult to call her a mere dressmaker—and was a marvel of pale-pink silk, gauze and roses. As

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Virginia stood arrayed in it before her long glass that evening, she was justified in her smiling satisfaction.

A more bewitching little figure it would be hard to imagine, and as she entered the ball-room with her husband an hour later, she knew she was the best-dressed woman present. But then Lady Betty had not arrived.

"The Wincauntons haven't turned up yet. Everybody else seems to have arrived," remarked a tall, odd-looking young man, who was noting Lady Dawlish's name on his programme. "I hear they are coming quite a large party. Ronald has actually persuaded the old Duchess of Southmolton to grace the ball with her august presence!"

"Goodness! How terrible!" interrupted Lady Dawlish. "We shall all have to be so dreadfully on our P.'s and Q.'s! Why, Betty is fast, compared with her!"

"Oh, come now!" remonstrated the Honourable Dan Lovel, turning his single eye-glass reproachfully on Virginia. It had no visible string to attach it to his person, yet he hunted, danced, and played tennis without losing his grip of it for a single moment. To Virginia it had always been an object of intense fascination, and she and the Wincaunton children, who had christened Mr. Lovel "The Man with the Glass Eye," had many a bet as to how and when it would fall.

"I wish I knew how you keep it in, Dan! I believe you sleep with it like that," she murmured, with lazy impertinence.

Mr. Lovel laughed good-humouredly, and went on with his list of the Wincaunton party.

"Well, then there's a bevy of girls and men I don't know from Adam; but Hawkshead is there."

"Oh! is he?" exclaimed Lady Dawlish eagerly. "I'm so glad! He's far the best of the Windermere boys, and Betty's pet brother. You'll like him, Delia," she added, turning to a witch-like little lady she had brought with her, an American heiress she had known in her girlish days, who was now taking notes of everything and everybody with an energy peculiar to her countrywomen. She had already quite a crowd of young men about her, fascinated by her brilliant weirdness.

"Now, Mr. Lovel," she asked, in her little high-pitched voice, "who is this Lady Betty? and are her frocks so very wonderful?"

"I believe they are, Miss Van Schenck, but then I'm only an ignorant male, and I may be mistaken."

"Well, I must say you don't look like seeing very far," she

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rejoined coolly, with a glance at the eye-glass that sent her admirers into fits of silent merriment. "But, anyway, what's *he* like—Mr. Wincaunton? How in the world do you say it? Oh! yes, *Winkton*—fancy now! how English to go and spoil a pretty name like that! It's aristocratic, I suppose?"

"Very," rejoined Mr. Lovel gravely.

"Ah, well! but what *is* he like? They say she married him for love."

"He is considered extremely like me," said Mr. Lovel mendaciously, and glancing modestly round to his friends for approval.

"Why, whatever did she see in him then?" ejaculated Miss Delia naïvely, and in a shrill *staccato*.

A burst of delighted laughter greeted this sally. Miss Van Schenck looked about her with an air of childish astonishment, infinitely amusing to Lady Dawlish, who knew her friend's little ways.

"You needn't ask any more questions, for here comes Mr. Wincaunton with the Duchess of Southmolton, and there's dear Hawkshead and a lot of girls, and—— Goodness! Mr. Brooke! and——" She stopped and gasped for breath.

With her graceful head bent towards John Brooke, who was talking smilingly to her, came Lady Betty Wincaunton, a dream of beauty, in a gown whose perfection baffles description. It was of white brocade and embroidery, severely simple as were all Lady Betty's gowns, but with lines and folds that would have ravished the soul of an artist. But who, in wonder's name, was the woman who walked beside her, her lovely fair head on a level with Lady Betty's dark one, her lissom slenderness as beautiful in its way as the other's stately grace, her rose-blush complexion acting as an admirable foil to the ivory pallor of her companion's more chiselled features? Who was this whose gown matched Lady Betty's, line for line, fold for fold, shade for shade? There was but one difference. Lady Betty had on the famous Mendip diamonds, lent to her by her mother-in-law, whereas the fairer and younger-looking woman wore pearls as perfect and priceless as the Countess's jewels.

For one moment the whole roomful of people stood bewildered at the lovely apparition, and then the truth flashed upon them.

Lady Betty had chosen the most marked way that lay in her power of protesting her belief in her friend's innocence, and had accorded to Juliet Brooke a favour she had denied to her own sisters. Josephine, with the help of Juliet's maid, had duplicated

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her mistress's gown, and it was hard to say which of the two beautiful women did most justice to her clever brain and fingers.

Lord Hawkshead, turning round, claimed Mrs. Brooke's hand, and led her off to dance. The whole room was in a buzz of excited conversation.

"I shall never believe Maria Staunton again," whispered Mrs. de Vere Tomson indignantly to her neighbour, Lady Bridge; "this is the second time I've been taken in by her love of gossip. I had it from her, you know, that Mrs. Brooke had really gone off with the cousin!"

"And you don't think——" began Lady Bridge, her fair, fat face puckered up with perplexity.

"My dear, how can I? Of course the whole story was a fabrication. Would she have come with the Wincauntons and the Duchess, who is more particular even than Lady Betty? Would Mr. Brooke have had the face to bring her here? and would Lady Betty have done a thing she's never done for a single other woman and have let her copy her gown as if she were her twin-sister? I ask you!"

At the same moment a little elderly gentleman, irreproachably got up and with a clever, kindly face, walked over to where her Grace of Southmolton sat in state amongst the chaperons.

"Duchess, I should like to have the rights of that story," he said with the air of one whose requests were never refused. Nor were they often, for by some happy combination of talent and attraction Mr. St. John Vignolles had become the spoilt pet of society, whose follies he caricatured in his novels, but to whose weaknesses he ministered even while he affected to despise them.

The Duchess looked at him keenly; he was a favourite of hers and she knew him for an inveterate gossip.

"It will be, 'I had it from the dear Duchess of Southmolton' to all his acquaintance for the next fortnight at least," she said to herself. Aloud she asked, "What story, St. John?"

"The story that is afloat about our pretty friend there. I own I am puzzled. When it comes to Lady Betty playing Corsican sister to her in this way, one doesn't know what to believe."

"Yes, I was a little inclined to think Betty had made a mistake there, but really now I see them together the effect

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quite justifies the venture. Don't you think so?" she asked, glancing indulgently at the two beauties who happened to be standing side by side at that moment.

"In the way of effect it is a stroke of genius on Lady Betty's part. But what really happened about Mrs. Brooke? Where is the cousin?"

"Ah! yes, there comes in the want of *savoir faire*," remarked her Grace, "for you must allow, St. John, that with all her beauty there's a touch of breeding lacking somewhere. I suppose running about with handsome cousins is a harmless amusement in Manchester or wherever she comes from," the Duchess's tone relegated that problematical region to the sphere of the impossible—"but it won't do in Huntshire, as she has found out, poor child! for a day's shopping in London with the wicked Guardsman has nearly cost her her reputation. However, as Mr. Brooke met them and came back with her, even Huntshire isn't left with much to talk about. Her husband ought to have known better, though, than to have had such a *mauvais sujet* about his house."

"And that was all," sighed Vignolles, eyeing Mrs. Brooke through his glasses. "Well, I'm glad of it," he added warmly, "for she is a sweet pretty young creature."

"She is quite lovely," corrected her Grace somewhat severely, "and with Lady Betty to refer to and as a friend she ought to do well."

And so she did. That terrible hour in the train had revealed the husband and wife to each other. She never again gave him cause for anxiety; her weakness gathered strength from his strength, and his reserve melted and his manners softened under her gentle, caressing nature. Children came to brighten her life and to deepen the love that bound her to her husband. Captain Vincy troubled the neighbourhood no more with his unwelcome presence, and Beechfields and Wincaunton Court remained on the closest and happiest terms of intimacy. Mrs. Brooke's good name was re-established beyond dispute.

Society, in the more conventional sense of the word, is at best a strange and paradoxical institution, little affected by the great things of the spirit; and what all the faith and friendship in the world could never have done to reinstate Juliet Brooke in its good graces, had been achieved by the duplication of Lady Betty's ball-gown.

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POLITICAL PAMPHLETS BY MEN OF GENIUS.

To some of us, when dwelling with complacency upon the wealth of that noble literature which Macaulay styles the most lasting of the many glories of England, the reflection must have occurred, how small a part of that literature is immortal; nay, how small is the part which has survived the mutations of two or three centuries! At best a national literature lives only in the memories of a fraction of the nation, in the memories of those who have leisure and taste to appreciate works which have lost the charm of novelty and the gloss of fashion. Even among these, how few are really familiar with the authors of any age but their own! How little of the literature, say, of the seventeenth century, is known at first hand to the best-educated Englishmen! A few of its great poems all persons with self-respect profess to have read. But what has become of its most remarkable prose writings? Bacon's 'Essays' are read in schools; Milton's 'Areopagitica' is set for examinations; Clarendon's 'History of the Rebellion' is still consulted by those who concern themselves with English annals; and here and there a devout or curious reader may have brushed the dust from a volume of Jeremy Taylor. But who turns over the pages of those sermons of Barrow which the great Chatham recommended to his son as the noblest models of English eloquence? Who bestows an idle hour upon those prefaces of Dryden, which to a connoisseur so accomplished as Charles Fox seemed among the purest sources of English undefiled? A new age finds Barrow heavy and Dryden superficial. Soon or late a twilight falls upon the gods themselves, and in a few generations the immortals of literature find their shrines forsaken and their laurels withered.

The oblivion which so speedily descends upon many of our classics has causes, some of which affect all literature equally

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whilst others affect English literature with peculiar force. All monuments of genius are more perishable than we like to own. From its very birth a famous book carries within itself the seeds of decay. Every revolution of thought, every accession of knowledge, every fresh wave of feeling, every new phase of experience, removes the reader further and further from the writer. The old-fashioned wisdom seems childish, the old-fashioned sentiment seems frigid. The arguments which convinced another age, in our age conclude nothing. The eloquence which thrilled our forefathers makes their descendants yawn. Stung with disappointment, we impeach the skill of the artist, we impeach our own taste; in these sad partings we find fault with everything except the destiny of mankind, which makes them inevitable. We part, in spite of struggles and regrets, slowly, but certainly we part. This sense of distance must be felt by all who retrace the growth of a literature which has lived through many ages. It is not felt by the student of English literature alone.

But English prose literature is more subject than most others to one species of decay. An exceptionally large part of it has a direct practical aim. To this practical aim it owes some of its greatest merits; its rude vigour and its prevailing common-sense. But this practical aim can be attained only by arts irreconcilable with lasting worth. No writer can produce an immediate effect unless he is in sympathy with the public, or with some large portion of the public. If he shares the ideas and the passions of the hour, he cannot write for all time. If he is to convince here and now, he must not see too wide, he must not search too deep, he must not soar too high. He must not draw distinctions too fine for a multitude to grasp; he must not indulge feelings too fine for a faction to share.

> "He must be bold, proud, pleasant, resolute,
> And now and then stab as occasion serves."

And as he must take care that his matter shall not be too good, so he must take care that his style shall not be too exquisite. Plain palates like rough flavours. Men hot with passion do not care for a style which renders with precision each delicate shade of thought. They like a style which expresses most forcibly what they most intemperately feel. In one word, immediate effect is obtained only at the expense of permanent effect. A writer striving after practical results may be hampered by his very genius. Practical results are often attained by a writer without any genius at all.

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Considerations like these can hardly fail to strike any one who turns over the best known of English political pamphlets. The application of literary skill to political purposes is scarcely possible except in free states. In the free states of antiquity this application was made by the orator. In the free states of to-day this application is made by the journalist. But in the seventeenth and even in the eighteenth century political discussion was carried on chiefly by means of pamphlets. Interest in public affairs was felt by many whom spoken eloquence could not reach. Yet readers were not numerous enough to maintain a crowd of magazines appearing once a month, still less a crowd of newspapers appearing every day and every hour. Accordingly pamphlets did most of the work which at other times has been done by means of speeches or of newspaper articles. Especially was this the case in the seventeenth century. We hardly realize the bulk of printed matter under which the presses groaned at every crisis in the political and religious struggle of the Stuart period. It was so great as to suggest wonder where sufficient buyers or readers could be found. In the eighteenth century the newspaper and the review began to displace the pamphlet. When Parliamentary debates came to be freely reported, statesmen at all events lost their chief motive for writing pamphlets. But it was not until our own century that the pamphlet became obsolete as a political weapon.

By far the greater number of these pamphlets had a merely momentary value. But a few had something more. Most of the celebrated English men of letters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote at least a pamphlet or two, and some of them unfortunately wrote little else, at least in prose. Among these pamphleteers of genius three stand conspicuous above all others, Milton, Swift, and Burke. Three more illustrious names cannot be found in the whole range of our literature. The pamphlets written by these men are still numbered among our classics. A strictly literary criticism of their pamphlets is the object of this paper. By a strictly literary criticism is meant a criticism which as far as possible avoids an attempt to pronounce upon the merits of the particular controversies which gave occasion to the writings criticised. Limited in this way, the criticism of a political pamphlet may sometimes be worth undertaking, because such a pamphlet may have an interest and a value which outlast the discussion that gave it birth. A fugitive publication may be of lasting worth because of the soundness of

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its substance, because of its moral and political wisdom, or because of the excellence of its form, because of the force and beauty of its expression. The pamphlet especially affords freer scope to genius than can ever be afforded by the newspaper. The pamphlet is not tied down to those hard conditions of time and space which govern the leading article. It is not robbed by editorial supervision of all personal force and flavour. The pamphlet may attain to character and individuality. Things of general human interest have now and then found their way into pamphlets, oftenest, perhaps, into those pamphlets which were of little use towards the purpose aimed at by the author.

Of the three men whose names have been mentioned, Milton had the most powerful genius, yet was the least admirable pamphleteer. That this should have been so, will not surprise anybody who considers Milton's bent of mind and way of life. A poet by natural vocation, a student by deliberate choice, Milton lived in habitual commerce with his own high imaginings and with the noblest thoughts of the mighty dead. A temper as fastidious as it was severe may be traced in the fewness of his friendships and in the jars of his domestic life. Passionate as were his love of country and desire of fame, their singular intensity drew him not nearer to but further from the crowd of his fellow-men. Such a man was not likely to be a serviceable party hack. He was aware of his own unfitness for this drudgery: "Knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account, but of my left hand."* Yet he would not refrain from a species of writing which alone enabled him to take part in a contest as thrilling to him as to Hampden or to Cromwell. So he gave twenty years, his eyesight, and the best strength of an incomparable genius to writing pamphlets which had but a restricted influence upon the public.

The most obvious shortcoming of these pamphlets is the lack of contact with the circumstances and the opinion of the day. Compared with Swift's or Burke's pamphlets, these are the pamphlets of an inspired book-worm. Not himself a public man like Burke, nor even living habitually with public men like Swift, Milton was at a hopeless disadvantage in a time when Parliamentary debates and State papers were kept secret, when newspapers were only beginning to appear, and when one part of England scarcely knew as much about the thoughts and feelings

* 'Reason of Church Government.'

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of another part as we know about the thoughts and feelings of Berlin or Madrid. Milton as a journalist could never be up to date. It was impossible for him to catch the latest breath of an agitated public. He wanted that everyday knowledge which is the one thing needful for an everyday argument. Thus at the very moment when the Commonwealth was crumbling into military anarchy, Milton was still confident that it could be made perpetual. After setting out his plan of a republic, he writes:—

"The Grand Council being thus firmly constituted to perpetuity, and still upon the death or default of any member supplied and kept in full number, there can be no cause alleged why peace, justice, plentiful trade and all prosperity should not thereupon ensue throughout the land; with as much assurance as can be of human things, that they shall so continue (if God favour us and our wilful sins provoke Him not) even to the coming of our true and rightful and only to be expected King, only worthy, as He is our only Saviour, the Messiah, the Christ, the only Heir of His Eternal Father, the only by Him anointed and ordained since the work of our redemption finished, universal Lord of all mankind." *

These words were written in the year 1660, just before the Restoration of Charles the Second. The writer who used them moved perhaps in a higher sphere, but not in the sphere of human policy.

Nor had Milton that innate political tact which goes far to supply the want of political knowledge. He discussed politics, sometimes with the inspiration of a poet, sometimes with the pedantry of a schoolmaster, but never as a man accustomed to manage mankind would discuss them. The most fearless and outspoken of enthusiasts, he everywhere acknowledged, nay asserted with peculiar fervour and insistence, opinions and aspirations which might not be unworthy of John Milton, but which must have seemed as dangerous and detestable to the average Puritan as to the average Cavalier. In these pamphlets can be found no trace of the art so familar to advanced politicians, the art of getting dull people to accept new principles by withdrawing their minds from the consequences which these principles must involve. Were this all, we could not regret that Milton lacked the low cunning of a partisan. But his deficiency went further. He lacked the equable prudence of a true statesman. When he took a side in the debates of rougher and coarser natures he lost all balance and all measure. Those who upheld Monarchy and Prelacy he

* 'The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth.'

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esteemed altogether bad. Those who warred against Monarchy and Prelacy he esteemed altogether good. In this simple faith he was often rudely tried. When the Long Parliament triumphed, he was disappointed to find that new presbyter was but old priest writ large. Such will ever be the disappointment of the dreamer who looks for the fulfilment of his ideals by men who are powerful because they are practical.

Even the learning which these pamphlets display is rather a blemish than a merit. With too much erudition to please the multitude, they have too little science to satisfy a philosopher. They exhibit knowledge in its least alluring or improving form; a mass of citations and references, undigested and chaotic, unleavened by historic sense or by critical discrimination. Authorities ancient and modern, Scriptural and classical, genuine and spurious, are all equally laid under contribution for the purpose in hand. Learning thus employed, even by a tranquil seeker after truth, would be supremely useless. Employed thus by an angry partisan, learning becomes absolutely ridiculous. It is true that in making this use of his learning Milton was no more singular than in his lavish use of ferocious invective. Pedantry and scurrility disfigured the works of most learned men in that age. Against Milton himself the injudicious and uncritical use of authorities ought not to be made a reproach, but in his writings it is a grave fault, seeing that it makes them obsolete and disagreeable.

The one thing which redeems these pamphlets is their revelation of a heroic nature whose splendour no fumes of controversy or mist of bewildered learning can obscure. This intense and glowing mind, devoted with entire simplicity to what it deemed the cause of God, compels our admiration even when it most repels us by its arrogance, its injustice, its bitter and implacable party-spirit. Eminently characteristic of the man was the love of liberty which inspires these writings. The liberty for which Milton thirsted was above all things liberty of conscience. "Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." * It is true, unhappily, that he grudged this liberty to Roman Catholics, and in a less degree to Anglican Protestants. The only valid excuse which we can urge for this large exception to a scheme of general liberty lies in the fact that neither Anglican

* 'Areopagitica.'

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nor Catholic would at that time have consented to tolerate other forms of Christianity. The Independent was forced to choose whether he would be hammer or anvil. Saints might have chosen the part of the anvil; the part of the hammer was naturally preferred by men.

So long as Milton might secure liberty of conscience, he was not nice about political details. He does not seem to have cared particularly for popular government. He seems to have expected that under the Commonwealth, as under the Monarchy, the nobility and gentry would remain the leaders of the nation. He proposed in one of his latest pamphlets that the Grand Council which he wished to substitute for Parliament should consist of members holding their seats for life or during good behaviour. When Cromwell expelled the Long Parliament, Milton forgave the outrage which to him seemed the only way of securing the benefits won in the Civil War. When the Commonwealth was tottering, he wrote in the same sense :—

"They who past reason and recovery are devoted to kingship, perhaps will answer that a greater part by far of the nation will have it so, the rest therefore must yield. Not so much to convince these, which I little hope, as to confirm those who yield not, I reply; that this greatest part have both in reason and the trial of just battle lost the right of their election what the government shall be; of them who have not lost that right, whether they for kingship be the greater number, who can certainly determine? Suppose they be, yet of freedom they all partake alike, one main end of government; which if the greater part value not, but will degenerately forego, is it just or reasonable that most voices, against the main end of government, should enslave the less number, that would be free? more just it is, doubtless, if it come to force, that a less number compel a greater to retain, which can be no wrong to them, that liberty than that a greater number, for the pleasure of their baseness compel a less, most injuriously to be their fellow-slaves. They who seek nothing but their own just liberty have always right to win it and to keep it, whenever they have power, be the voices never so numerous that oppose it. And how much we above others are concerned to defend it from kingship, and from them who in pursuance thereof so perniciously would betray us and themselves to most certain misery and thraldom will be needless to repeat." *

In truth, Milton's love of liberty was far removed from the

* 'The Ready and Easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth.'

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love of liberty so widely professed to-day. Milton was by circumstances a rebel, but by temper an aristocrat. He did not stand in awe of the masses, or profess to copy their ideas or to share their tastes. He was morally and intellectually fastidious. He was as proud as his own Lucifer. If he was a republican, it was less because he desired to find equals than because he scorned to acknowledge a lord. He was a republican not of the modern but of the antique school. He had nourished his mind upon the utterances of Roman statesmen, and Greek philosophers, and Hebrew prophets, and he had caught their accent of conscious worth and unbending courage. This accent, however, soothes the ear neither of kings nor of crowds. Milton's republican strain will always find an echo in young and enthusiastic readers; but it will not recommend him to the general public, even when all the world has been Americanised.

In point of style Milton's pamphlets cannot be praised without reserve. They display, indeed, those literary qualities which might be expected in anything written by the author of 'Comus' or of 'Paradise Lost,' the "wealth of magnificent words," the varied music of the long and involved but carefully modulated period, and ever and anon, when rising to the height of some great argument, a swelling pomp of rhetoric, a profusion of living images which silences criticism and leaves admiration breathless. But then they have none of the literary qualities which are most essential to the pamphlet. They have not lucid order. There is in them hardly a trace of that skilful disposition of topics which multiplies the weight of an argument as much as the skilful marshalling of troops multiplies the power of an army. There is hardly a sign of that logical art which produces the greatest effect upon the reader's opinions with the least trouble to his understanding. Not all the richness of language can conceal the awkwardness of argument. Again, the undigested learning of these pamphlets is a defect in point of form as well as of substance. Long strings of citations cannot be made eloquent even by Milton. So likewise their scurrility is an artistic as well as a moral blemish. Party spirit is natural in party pamphlets; but it should not vent itself merely in downright abuse, unrelieved by wit or irony. Anger is a powerful literary motive; but only when under intellectual governance. If the angry advocate can portray characters which, possibly not appropriate to his adversaries, are yet true of certain men in every age, then he may expect to find in every age delighted readers. Possibly Aristo-

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phanes and Tacitus libelled the contemporaries whom they have immortalised; but the characters of Aristophanes and Tacitus still walk in our streets, and sit in our assemblies. The sneer of Tacitus and the caricature of Aristophanes still find a response in every reader of Latin or of Greek literature; whilst Milton's representations of his adversaries already strike us as forced and unnatural, and merely awaken regret that so transcendent a writer should have conformed to the bad fashion of his time.

Milton's pamphlets are the uneven result of the drudgery of a man of genius in a field not truly his own. Swift's pamphlets are the triumphs of a master in the art of polemical writing. We may regret that the energies of Swift even more than of Milton were consumed in this profitless travail. Milton's poems alone would assure his fame. Swift's verses, admirable as they sometimes are, would not by themselves establish him a classic. Out of his prose, which fills fifteen volumes, only 'Gulliver's Travels,' the 'Tale of a Tub,' and the 'Journal to Stella,' have enough human interest to keep them fresh for many ages. His remaining works have been likened, not quite unjustly, to a row of rusty cannon in an old armoury. Once resistless to beat down and break in pieces, they move us now only by the faint remembrance of the havoc which they have made. Yet we must own that in controversy Swift was at home, and that the pamphlet was a form of expression well suited to his genius. Few men have joined so clear an intellect to a temper so combative. Fewer still who have felt such an agony of angry passion have been able to subdue it to an irony so grave and austere. Since Swift wrote, thousands of able men have used the pen as a weapon of political warfare, and half-a-dozen of them have become famous. But which of the half-dozen shall we place even second to Swift? Compared with Swift, Junius is a commonplace rhetorician, Cobbett a sturdy clown, Sydney Smith a monotonous humorist. Swift plays upon every key of party emotion, and always finds the note needed at the moment. Fear and scorn, hate and distrust, anger and revenge, he can command them all. He in his own way not less than Marlborough could "ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm." He wrote his political pieces not with the left hand but with the right; and it was the right hand of Achilles.

Judged with reference to their object, these pamphlets of Swift are among the best things in our literature. They have lost much of their interest now that the occasions which

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prompted them are forgotten. Their constant bitterness, and now and then their nastiness, make them distasteful to sensitive readers. Their simplicity of style seems poverty-stricken to those who think that good writing means fine writing. But those who know what style means will own these pamphlets models of literary art. To be perfectly familiar yet by no means vulgar, to be precise without being pedantic, to argue without becoming tedious, to tell impossible things in a way which makes them seem quite natural, to prejudice your reader whilst yourself seemingly unprejudiced, to stir him to madness whilst yourself seemingly unmoved, to employ every artifice of the most dexterous advocate whilst never dropping the disguise of the modest parish priest or homely tradesman; all this Swift has done so often and with so much address, that after reading him it seems quite easy to do, and one forgets for a moment that in our literature it has been done by Swift alone. He has done the feat best in the 'Drapier's Letters.' I know of nothing else like them, and I know of nothing else which may wait longer for a rival. The reader feels that they could not have been written by a tradesman; yet he cannot well believe that they were written by the Dean. The language has all the literary qualities, yet is that of an illiterate man. The arguments are often unsound enough to find general acceptance, yet the author conceals admirably his knowledge of their unsoundness. The result of the blending of the real author and his imagined trader is as piquant to us as it was exciting to his countrymen.

About the efficacy of Swift's polemical writings there can be no question; but there has been much question as to the nature of Swift's personal opinions. Nor is this surprising when we consider Swift's peculiar position. He put forth all his powers on behalf of the Tories; but he had reached middle-life before he quitted the Whigs. He fought the battles of the Church; but he certainly had no clerical vocation. He pleaded the cause of Ireland, but the country he disliked and the bulk of the people he despised. It is therefore natural that many, especially those who disagreed with him, should have regarded this puissant champion as a mere soldier of fortune, careless for whom he fought, and chagrined only because he failed to secure his booty. What seems to confirm their suspicion is the impartial and unqualified scorn which Swift, in his freer moods, pours out upon all factions, civil or ecclesiastical. What he thought of our venerable Constitution he has betrayed in Gulliver's conversation

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with the King of Brobdingnag. What he thought of politicians he has told us in the last of the 'Drapier's Letters.' "Few politicians, with all their schemes, are half so useful members of a commonwealth as an honest farmer; who, by skilfully draining, fencing, manuring and planting, hath increased the intrinsic value of a piece of land, and thereby done a perpetual service to his country, which it is a great controversy whether any of the former ever did since the creation of the world; but no controversy that ninety-nine in a hundred have done abundant mischief." What Swift thought of ecclesiastical disputes he has pretty plainly told in his 'Tale of a Tub,' and still more plainly in those famous lines on the Last Judgment, which, although disputed, seem too pungent to have come from any other author. Such a man might have been expected to set less store by the contentions of Whig and Tory, and to tolerate Nonconformists in a petty allowance of power and preferment. Yet as a Tory and Churchman Swift may have been sincere. If little prone to glorify an established order, he was apt enough to cry down the capacity of mankind. Vicious and foolish as they are, he seems to say, it is odd that they should have been able to set up any civil or ecclesiastical polity. What they have set up may be a poor contrivance; but it is as good as could be expected from them. Why trouble yourself to alter mere mechanical arrangements of state when the men upon whom all depends and for whom all exists are naturally base and necessarily miserable? Why vex your soul with the interminable wrangle of theologians when the very little which we know, or need to know, about religion is plain to every man possessed of common sense, if not puffed up with vanity and presumption? Rather let everything be and possess your soul in patience; for wisdom and endurance lessen the evils which they cannot cure. Let knaves and enthusiasts bawl for reformation; they know not what they want, or if they do, they know that they want their own advantage, not the public good.

Such, we may conjecture, was the real unaffected temper of Swift's mind. Expecting little from change, he was naturally conservative. Knowing how trivial are many of the subjects of political and ecclesiastical debate, he thought the disputants fools, and their noise a nuisance to be suppressed as speedily as possible. Sensitive to everything grotesque or frantic, he preferred a decent routine to the vagaries of enthusiasm. Constitutionally imperious and despotic, he followed his bent on taking the side of authority. Having chosen the clerical

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profession, he was confirmed in all those innate propensities. He took orders at a time when the Church was making her last effort to retain exclusive domination. He felt as a personal wrong the dissidence of the crowd, the unbelief of the fine gentlemen, and the mean estimation in which his calling was held. Upon considering all these things, we shall be surprised rather at his so long remaining a Whig than at his finally becoming a Tory. Once engaged in a party conflict, he was carried by his fierce, overbearing disposition into every excess which his keen, sceptical intellect might have been expected to condemn. The inconsistency may point his own satire upon man, it should surprise only those who have been able to regulate their lives by strict syllogism.

The pamphlets of Burke are far more alive than the pamphlets of Milton or of Swift. Their peculiar freshness cannot be explained merely by their more recent date. The 'Letters of Junius' were written by a contemporary of Burke, and acquired a celebrity not inferior to that of Burke's best known writings; yet the 'Letters of Junius' have long since failed to find readers, and are steadily losing even reputation. Nor is the interest still felt in Burke's pamphlets the effect merely of excellence in style, although they possess that excellence in a very eminent degree. Burke, when discoursing of the greatest affairs at the highest pitch of his faculty, is magnificent indeed. But no more than Milton can Burke be held up as a faultless model of expression. Like other writers whose power of rhetoric is out of all proportion to their sense of humour, Burke is so uniformly elaborate and solemn as often to oppress the reader with a sense of fatigue, and now and then to force a smile at little things described in lofty terms. Nor was Burke defective merely in point of humour. He was not faultless in point of taste. Occasional extravagance in denunciation was a fault inseparable from his temperament and sanctioned by the usage of his time. Much less excusable were the physically offensive images in which he sometimes indulged. Take one instance, it is one too many. "That debt" (of the Nabob of Arcot to the East India Company) "forms the foul, putrid mucus, in which are engendered the whole brood of creeping ascarides, all the endless involutions, the eternal knot, added to a knot of those inexpugnable tape-worms which devour the nutriment and eat up the bowels of India." In point of sense as well as in point of refinement, nothing could be worse than this loathsome sentence.

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If Burke's art was sometimes at fault, his matter was too often unmanageable. That this was so infers no reproach against him. The publicist, who insists upon doing his duty, must work up masses of material at once intractable and perishable, quantities of administrative financial and statistical detail which cannot be made attractive to any readers except those whose persons or property are immediately concerned. Burke was too much in earnest not to make free use of such dry knowledge, which in his speeches and pamphlets lies mingled with arguments appealing to the reason of every age, and with outbursts of pathetic or indignant eloquence able to stir the passions of every feeling heart. Thus, out of the seventy pages filled by Burke's 'Speech on the Debts of the Nabob of Arcot,' ten perhaps belong to our classical literature, whilst the remaining sixty belong merely to the politics of that day. The crowd of light and hasty readers will not stop to crush all this quartz in order to win these few ounces of gold. Even the patient and serious reader will feel that his sense of what is truly precious has been dulled by all the toil of extraction. For these treasures one must extract oneself; one cannot really master a great author in a book of excerpts. In the upshot, the student of Burke comes to limit himself more and more to the few works, such as the 'Reflections on the Revolution in France,' in which general reasoning predominates over particular data.

What really gives immortal life to these writings often hastily thrown off, is their peculiar strain of wise and suggestive thought, the wisdom of a man who has been deeply versed in public affairs, yet has never been so much immersed in business as to have no time for meditation. Destined by nature for a literary life, Burke received from circumstances a practical discipline. He was not like Milton, an enthusiastic student destitute of knowledge of the world, or like Swift, a journalist tied to the defence of measures in which he had no share. Burke was a veteran member of Parliament, and a leader of a great political party. Yet he was not like the younger Pitt, or like Sir Robert Walpole, absorbed in the toils of office and of the House of Commons. He was generally in opposition, and never in the Cabinet. He escaped the drudgery of success and the slavery of power. He had leisure to continue those noble studies which enlarge the intellect and enliven the imagination. Thus he preserved what Matthew Arnold finely styles, "a just sense of the greatness of great affairs." He never fell into the besetting sin of public life, the impiety of regarding the government of a mighty people as a

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mere exercise of low cunning. He never forgot that politics means something more than the tricks of politicians. He never confused the wisdom of the statesman with the artifice of the debater or party manager. He could give lasting life and power to his studies of passing political questions, because, with a working knowledge of mankind and a remarkable mastery of detail, he blended an ideal elevation of sentiment and a philosophical breadth of conception.

It would be absurd, however, to hold up Burke as invariably and inevitably wise. His actions often and sometimes his writings were marred by the extravagance of a sensitive nature. As an Irishman and a man of letters, Burke was irritable and overstrung. Beyond all other callings, public life requires a firm, cheerful and placid temperament. Beyond all other wisdom, political wisdom is liable to be made useless by excitability. Burke's feelings were habitually in excess. He loved with passionate adoration, and hated with intense bitterness. Whilst yet young, strong and happy, he was able to govern his temperament and so to repress his inward fire, that it made itself felt only in a steady glow, giving warmth and colour to all that he wrote or said. But when old and weary, and laden with many sorrows, he too often failed to master the passion which waxed wild within him, and burst into that shrieking rhetoric which gives pain rather than conviction. In judging what Burke wrote upon the French Revolution, we must indeed remember the immensity of the interests at stake, and the horror which many of the incidents occurring in France could not fail to inspire, and if we take these things into account, we shall not condemn many passages in the 'Reflections;' but in the 'Letters on a Regicide Peace' we shall still find much that is intolerable. In judging Burke's speeches on the impeachment of Warren Hastings, we must acknowledge the uprightness of his intention and the service which he did in awakening the national conscience to the duties of Eastern Empire; but we cannot quite condone the readiness with which he adopted every charge, however improbable, and we must altogether condemn the temper in which he conducted the prosecution, the temper of a Stuart judge, a temper which defeated his purpose by awakening public sympathy for the man so savagely assailed.

From this brief comparison of the political writings of Milton, Swift, and Burke, we may conclude how hard it is to write a perfect pamphlet. We may also be led to regret that any fine

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genius should spend his powers on work which, however well done, can hardly be lasting. We may regret that Milton should for twenty years have preferred the use of his left hand to the use of his right. We may regret that Swift should so often have emptied upon Whigs and Dissenters the vials of a wrath too capacious for any object less than the whole human race and its destiny. And even if we allow that instinct guided Burke into the course of industry most honourable for himself as well as most useful for his country, we must remember that some of his writing has been antiquated in the course of one hundred years, and that we cannot tell how little of it a thousand years will spare. Yet we must not indulge our regret too far. A certain waste of power is inseparable from exuberant life. Literature divorced from action is apt to languish and to pass through triviality into nothingness. If closely allied with action, literature must concern itself largely with things of transitory import, and must in some degree share their perishable nature. Before we can say, therefore, how much literary genius has been wasted in England, we must judge English literature as a whole. Under no circumstances could Milton have written many works like 'Paradise Lost,' or Swift many works like 'Gulliver's Travels,' or Burke many works like the 'Reflections on the Revolution in France.' But the one living character in 'Paradise Lost,' the character of Satan, owes much of its heroic reality to the experience of the vanquished Puritan.

> "What though the field be lost,
> All is not lost; the unconquerable will
> And study of revenge, immortal hate,
> And courage never to submit or yield,
> And what is else not to be overcome."

So, too, the very soul of the baffled politician and exiled courtier animates those wonderful pictures of human folly and baseness, which at once fascinate and repel the reader of Gulliver's adventures. So, too, the best passages of the 'Reflections on the Revolution in France' express the wisdom gathered in a long life of action as well as of study, of converse with living men and with public affairs as well as with letters and with philosophy. These treasures are ours. Could we have had them at a cheaper rate? Who knows?

F. C. MONTAGUE.

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SCENES IN RUSSIA.

BY ANDRÉE HOPE.

PART II.

"ANITSCKA," said I, "I cannot allow these chickens and these calves to remain any longer in the kitchen. I told you this yesterday, and also the day before, but here they still are."

"The little mother shall be obeyed," says Anitscka, with obliging alacrity.

Nevertheless, although I have had an outhouse prepared for the calves and have had perches put up for the chickens, with the exception that the former are tied near the door, no change takes place. It is very difficult to be angry with Anitscka, my bare-legged, soft-eyed Russian handmaid. She is so smiling, so good-tempered, so obliging, so ready with her promises, but alas! those promises are never fulfilled. On the subject of cleanliness our battles are of daily, nay, almost hourly occurrence. While I work with her, while my searching eyes are upon her, all goes fairly well; but let those eyes be removed, let her be for a few minutes relieved of the incubus of my alarming presence, then Anitscka finds she has her duties or pleasures elsewhere. The cows must be looked at, the dog patted, or, still worse, some friend appears in the street with whom she must have a few moments' gossip.

One visitor is peculiarly trying to my patience, for what charms pretty Anitscka can see in Koris are difficult for an outsider to discover. All the love-making in words must be done by Anitscka, for except when opening his great jaws to swallow down a glass of kevass, or a spoonful of cabbage soup, Koris' mouth is solely devoted to his pipe. But it may be that his sentiments exhale in the mighty puffs of smoke, and the beatings of his heart are emitted in the heavy fumes of his tobacco. As to

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his face, it expresses nothing whatever; his stolid features might be cut out of wood, so steadily vacant are they.

When Koris appears in the street, or in our little yard, Anitscka's attention immediately becomes diverted from the cooking or cleaning in which she is engaged. When Koris proceeds to lean with his back against the window, Anitscka's mind is hopelessly gone. He never seems to look at her, or to pay her the least attention, but the fact of his presence is an absorbing interest. All I can ever then do is to send Koris on some errand; but I am conscious that this is an unfeeling remedy, and one I am not sufficiently hard-hearted to resort to frequently, for no sooner has he disappeared, than Anitscka's heart seems about to burst, so dreadful and profound are her sighs, and even rivulets of salt tears occasionally flow into the soup she is preparing.

Koris, both as a soldier and a servant, is the soul of fidelity and trustworthiness, but he has his failings, and they are such as make me doubtful of his merits as a husband. Koris, like too many of his countrymen, loves *vodka* to excess, and in his cups Koris is Koris no longer. A raving, howling madman takes his place. A madman who roars, sings, and yells until he falls, a shameful, inert mass upon the ground, there to remain in drunken insensibility until the fumes of the murderous liquor have passed from his besotted brain. Then Koris arises, and shakes himself like a dog awakening from sleep. With shaking limbs he staggers off to the bath, and first boils and then freezes himself in orthodox Russian fashion. However, this refreshing process restores his senses, and ere long, arranged with military neatness and precision, he presents himself before his master, composed and taciturn as ever. Vain are reproaches, equally vain are remonstrances. "A man must enjoy himself sometimes, Excellency," is invariably his calm reply.

But such being the habits of the suitor, I thought it my duty to speak to the girl.

"Anitscka," said I, "are you going to marry Koris?"

"Indeed yes, little mother."

"Do you love Koris?" continued I interrogatively.

"How should I know, little mother?" was the bashful reply.

"But surely," continued I, "if you do not know whether you love him or not, why not wait until you find a better man?"

"A better man than Koris, little mother? no, that would not be possible. Koris has a horse, little mother, and a cart. Oh! there is no one better than him."

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With such attractions I felt more expostulation would be useless, and as my acquaintance with soldiers and *moujiks* increased, I respected the horse and cart more, and thought less evil of the *vodka* drinkers. In fact, how can a perfectly uneducated man amuse himself? In most countries there are national games, besides the constant amusement of dancing. In Russia there are scarcely any national games, and in the north not much dancing. For the old, and even for the middle-aged, gossip and drinking are the only resources. And even gossip is restricted. It embraces little more than the affairs of the *mir* or community of villages, and should the *starost*, or head man, be present, even these affairs must be spoken of with caution. Few foreigners are aware of the great power exercised by the village tribunals, of which the *starost* is the head. These tribunals have been erected by the peasants themselves, and against their decisions there is very little power of appealing. Much has been said respecting the tyranny practised by the nobles, but their tyranny or despotism does not equal the thraldom in which the peasants are held by their own village tribunals.

It will be perceived that I am no longer an inmate of the Karàsoumoff Palace. So kind and generous are Russians, that I believe I might have remained for years as a nominal *dame de compagnie* to the Princess had I so wished, but a few months after my dear pupil's marriage I had the rare good fortune to become the wife of Colonel Vassiloffsky. My husband was soon afterwards appointed to a distant station, and so, when I left Moscow, I had little chance of seeing that interesting town, and the kind friends I had made there, for many years to come. However, our own speedy departure spared me the pang of another parting from my dear Princess Ariane, for she and Prince Alexis had gone for a lengthened tour in the South of Europe, and I hoped and believed she was happy, for her frequent letters were as gay and sprightly as her own cheerful self.

Our journey was a long one, but the weeks on board the steamboats that navigate the Volga are delightful. This great and majestic river traverses an immense extent of country. Sometimes the banks are steep and wooded, gay with many-coloured weeds, or decked with shrubs and trees, whose waving branches are beautiful in every shade of tender green; then again the rapid current widens, and its now slow and sluggish waves roll through a vast expanse of flat marshy land. In the bright sunshine the great river frequently looks like a stream of

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molten silver, sparkling with diamonds, as the shoals of fish with which its waters teem, rise and fall on its shining surface.

The songs of nightingales, the chimes of monasteries and village churches blend musically with the tender minor melodies sung by the boatmen as they ply their oars, or let their great rafts float with the current on their way to many a distant town. But the farther we progress, the more flat and uninteresting does the country become, and how dismal was the aspect of the town in which we were to find a home! Though a place of some importance, with a population of many thousand inhabitants, it appeared a mere heap of wretched houses, cast down accidentally in the midst of a vast, barren, and marshy plain. Here and there are a few thickets of scrubby fir or birch trees, but the prevailing characteristic of the dreary view is caused by the numerous swampy ponds with which the district is studded. In the summer these ponds have a certain beauty, from the masses of lovely water-lilies with which they are covered, but few dare approach too near, so cruel are the assaults of the myriads of bloodthirsty mosquitoes that rise in clouds from the muddy banks.

But the shock caused by the aspect of the town was as nothing compared to that I experienced on entering the house that was to be our home. As a house it was not bad, of one storey, solidly built, with large and rather lofty rooms. The windows also were large, though they admitted but little light, so thickly were they covered with mud and dust. But the atmosphere! How it reeked of garlic, kevass, and stale tobacco! For a few seconds I was staggered, but seeing my kind husband's eyes fixed anxiously upon me, I regained courage, and speedily became hopeful and happy, cheered by the reflection that mud can be washed and dust brushed away. Later on, however, what battles did I not have with Anitscka about the mud and dust, and those evil smells! She was so neat and clean herself; her chemise, with its puffed sleeves, was so white, her red bodice and embroidered petticoat were so pretty and trim, that I found it difficult to understand her contented endurance of dirty and untidy surroundings. Nothing would persuade her that a few sprinklings of dirty water over floors and walls were not fully sufficient for all purposes of cleanliness, and she would willingly have made the kitchen the home of all the animals we possessed. However, patience and perseverance, aided by a few kopecks and innumerable cups of tea, produced a certain amount of improvement;

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but Russian and English ideas of cleanliness are widely apart, and it is well-nigh impossible to make them assimilate.

One great, indeed insurmountable difficulty is the dust. None but those who have seen it, breathed it, and felt it, would believe in the dust of a Russian village or little town. It has no equal in the world save in the winter's mud of the same village. In the summer we look upon our ill-kept street through a haze of golden mist, golden enough when the sun's rays stream through it, but which leaves a coating of grey powder upon furniture, floors, hair, face, and hands. In the winter this dust is converted into a mass of liquid mud, black, sticky, and tenacious, in which pigs wallow to their hearts' content, and with which every passing vehicle so bespatters walls and houses that their original colour becomes indiscernible. The back of our house opens upon a piece of waste ground overgrown with weeds, save where they have been beaten down by mounds of dirt, broken crockery and other refuse; but here also a few kopecks and liberal use of tea speedily brought improvement.

The lower classes in Russia, especially the servants, are delightfully good-natured. They are also for the most part very intelligent, though unhappily their cleverness not unfrequently degenerates into cunning; nevertheless their idleness, their carelessness, their reckless indifference to truth, make them both difficult and trying to deal with. One is so delighted at first with their good temper, and willingness to oblige. It is such a pleasure to look into their beaming faces and hear their ready assent to every proposition, but unluckily nine times out of ten, their readiness stops with their assent. You are so pleased with them, and they are so pleased with themselves that they do no more.

They are satisfied, though you are not.

I am ashamed to acknowledge how often I have felt that a few blows would have solaced my irritated feelings, and I had often also the additional mortification of perceiving that they not only expected these blows, but even despised me for not inflicting them.

Poor as is the general aspect of our town, before the Governor's residence there is a broad boulevard planted with trees, and though it is dusty and ill-kept, here the *beau-monde* assembles to enjoy the evening air and listen to the excellent music of military bands. But pass out of this boulevard and the squalor of the neighbouring streets is almost inconceivable. The houses, or rather hovels, have tumbled out of all shape from sheer decrepitude. The rotting planks, the rotting roofs, have settled into

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horribly grotesque forms; in many instances the walls apparently being only supported or held together by old barrels, odd bits of iron, heaps of earthenware, or even by the mounds of refuse heaped around them. Need it be said that the atmosphere in and about such dwellings is horrible in the extreme. The gusts of hot, tainted air that come from many of the open doorways are absolutely sickening. But Russian *moujiks*, and especially Russian Jews, appear impervious to bad smells, otherwise the really fœtid atmosphere in which many of them pass their lives would kill them as certainly as a visitation of typhus or cholera, were they susceptible to such influences. Some of the worst portions of the town are inhabited by Jews, who, though content to abide in these wretched dwellings, are said to be possessed of considerable wealth.

The tumultuous stream of human life that is for ever seething in and through these streets fills a stranger with wonder. More wonderful still is it to see how handsome and well-grown are the people that issue from the loathsome dens. An old Jewess is not a pretty sight, old age comes to them in most cases with repulsive ugliness, but many of the young women, and especially the girls, are startlingly beautiful. Amidst the masses of dirty, half-naked children that are swarming in the gutters, from beneath almost a roofing of shaggy, unkempt hair may look forth faces as pure and beautiful in outline as those of the typical angel, although the delicate features are probably soiled and darkened by the dirt that has been upon them for unnumbered days—dirt producing eventually grievous and dangerous diseases.

I had much to do, I was happy, but it must be confessed that after the brilliant and intelligent society in Moscow, with which I had become in some degree acquainted, I found that of our little town uninteresting. Etiquette was rigid, and conversation was vapid. Very few of the ladies cared to read, or possessed interest in anything beyond the daily events of their daily life. Nevertheless, after a time I began to wish that my dear young Princess's views and objects were equally narrow. It is dangerous for a woman to be either more clever, or to have larger purposes in life than those amongst whom that life has to be passed. Such pre-eminence rarely fails to bring trouble both to the possessor, and to those whom she desires to benefit. And thus I feared it would be with my dear pupil. The tone of her letters changed. It was evident that she was troubled about many things, and

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by degrees her expressions caused me much and serious anxiety. She had returned to Russia, and appeared to be passing both days and nights in one continued round of excitement and gaiety. But such a life of uninterrupted frivolity could not, I was assured, satisfy one of her earnest temperament; I could not be surprised that she was neither happy nor satisfied, but I much feared she was allowing herself to be drawn into intimacy with people, whose mere acquaintance must be fraught with peril to one so continually before the world, so high in place as the Princess Ariane Karàsoumoff.

Then suddenly sorrow came to the great and hitherto prosperous family. The Prince was one night brought home dead from one of his most joyous orgies. Apoplexy struck him down even at the moment when he was raising his glass to drink to the health of the bright-eyed Bohemian who was his latest passion. As immovably as she had ever received his visits in life, so immovably did the Princess receive the intelligence of his death. Every detail of magnificent interment and mourning that old custom or new fashion could require was rigidly conformed to, the Princess apparently as calmly cold as ever, but from that moment she drooped. Ere long a formidable malady declared itself. She repaired to Paris, accompanied by her son and his wife, in order to place herself in the hands of the celebrated surgeons of that city. I know not what advice they gave, but she insisted upon an operation being attempted, and beneath that operation she died, with the same calm dignity that had been the characteristic feature of her later years.

Thus even the slight check or influence possessed by the heads of the family was lost to the poor young Princess, and while little more than a child, she was left to the guidance of her own warm heart, but alas! ill-regulated judgment. Her husband was undoubtedly clever, he was also rich and powerful. The period was one of considerable anxiety, for clouds more heavy and threatening than usual were arising on the political horizon. Revolutionary activity was rife in many quarters. Dangerous mutterings of an import that could not pass unnoticed were making themselves heard.

The Prince was made Governor of an important and disturbed district. Whether the measures he adopted were right or wrong, I am not competent to say. That they were both stern and severe, cannot be denied. The tender heart of the young Princess was tortured by the scenes she witnessed, by the sufferings

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she had no power to assuage. She soon discovered that what little influence she may have once possessed had departed. Then fierce anger filled her soul, and she threw herself with her usual energy into the cause of those whom she considered both unjustly and cruelly treated. More and more alarming became her letters. More and more alarming also became the reports respecting her that from time to time reached us. My selfish love for her made me perhaps callous to other duties, but earnestly, even passionately, I wrote to her. I entreated her to be cautious. I besought her to have nought to do with those, who, however righteous their cause, were considered the enemies of her country, and who, however noble their object, were doing wrong to attain it. Her last letter to me contained a strong, indeed angry rebuke for the cruel cowardice of my advice; but the words of anger were followed by so many of tender love, that my tears flowed fast as I read them, and I kissed the paper her dear hand had rested on, though I little dreamed that never again would that hand trace lines to me.

Then a hideous event occurred, one that horrified and well-nigh paralysed the whole of the civilized world. The mighty Czar, the all-powerful Emperor, was slain with savage barbarity by his own people, in his own capital, at the door of his own palace. Men of all countries, of all creeds, were aghast at the cruel deed, as barbarous as it was useless. All Russia was convulsed by the awful shock, but speedily did the horror-stricken Russians demand revenge, for now no man's life was safe, none knew who might not be the next victim.

Alas! but little enquiry was necessary to make it evident that the gangrene of stealthy and murderous conspiracy had taken deep root in every class. Nobles, merchants, soldiers, priests, moujiks, rich and poor, young and old, women as well as men had enrolled themselves in secret societies, sworn to destroy and even slay whoever held the reins of power. Wholesale, inhuman and cowardly murder was to be committed, and under the guise of patriotism the land was to be deluged in blood. Many of the instigators of this hideous outrage were traced to the province over which Prince Karàsoumoff was Governor.

The Almighty alone knows in what degree the miserable wretches accused were guilty, but in such a case Prince Alexis was not one to spare, and terrible indeed were the reprisals. The savage murder was followed by the savage sacrifice of a perfect holocaust of victims.

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My poor Princess! that she suffered fearfully I am convinced, but this I never learnt, for soon after these dreadful days she disappeared.

Yes—disappeared!

How or where she went no one would or could inform me; but one day she had gone, leaving no trace behind.

There had been neither charge, nor definite accusation, but the suspicion of political untrustworthiness had fallen upon her, of all crimes the most perilous, so intangible and impalpable is it, from the wide and arbitrary definitions that may be attached to it.

Those so charged are seldom informed of their crime. They are suspected, and they are removed. Some no doubt may be able to produce convincing proofs of their loyalty, but for the most part the fate of those thus arrested is shrouded in a dark, inscrutable and impenetrable veil of mystery.

Russia is very dear to me. I infinitely love the Russians, but this one awful blot, which stains the justice of the country, produces a terror and a repugnance that renders most of their good and noble qualities absolutely nugatory.

When we learnt the disappearance of my beloved Princess, we learnt at the same time that she had been supplanted in some degree by my quondam companion, Mademoiselle Blosse. How one so plain and uninteresting could have obtained any power over the heart of such a man as Prince Alexis appears impossible, but the history of the world shows that the preponderating passion in such men is vanity, and no doubt it was by playing up to this weakness that the Frenchwoman had gained her influence. When I learnt this, my heart sank. I well knew how little hope remained, for next to her love for the Prince was the strength of envy, almost hatred this woman felt for her beautiful pupil. There are some women to whom the beauty of another appears a positive insult, and occasionally produces such hatred that it leads to vitriol throwing, and other efforts to destroy the good looks of which they are so envious.

Letter after letter did I send. None were answered, the silence was impenetrable. In my despair I ventured to write to Prince Karàsoumoff himself. To this letter the Prince's secretary replied by a few civil words. I was thanked for my enquiries; the Princess was suffering, her mind had been slightly affected, but she was under skilful treatment, and would probably soon be restored to health. Perfect quiet, however, was for the present absolutely necessary, and she could see no one. Such was the

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answer I received; but we soon learnt that my presumption was not to pass unnoticed. Ere many weeks had passed my husband was unexpectedly transferred to another post, in a remote part of Siberia.

Then how I reproached myself that my too great love for my dear pupil had led me to forget my kind husband! I had forgotten the mighty power of interest in this vast country. My husband himself, however, was, or affected to be, delighted. He knew Siberia and liked it. The military advancement and also the importance of the post confided to him were very gratifying.

But oh! the journey. It was alarming to think of, and a trial to endure. As long as we could take advantage of railways and steamers, it was pleasant enough, but all the latter part of the way in the "Tarantass," or cart-carriage that is universally employed, was painfully trying. As we approached the north it became necessary to travel day and night, distances between halting-places being very great. Some of the posting-houses had tidy rooms and pretty gardens, others were too filthily dirty. Sometimes the floor on which we had to sleep was slippery from mud and dirt, and the rats peeped out from holes ready to hold their carnival over our recumbent bodies, while the evil smells engendered by neglect of all sanitary laws were infinitely increased by the crowd of moujiks who thronged the place, their only half-cleansed, greasy sheep-skin garments, and the dirty cloths in which their legs were wrapped, emitting most revolting odours. It is difficult to understand how human beings can endure such noisome smells, or calmly support the swarms of vermin that infest their garments. However, even long journeys have an end, and at length we arrived safely at our destination.

How much has been written about Siberia, and yet how little is it known! Still people are now aware that this immense country is not all ice, snow, and darkness, that in its vast area it can boast of scenery of every description. The mountains, the forests, the rivers of Siberia have a grandeur all their own, but their riches and their varied beauties have for centuries been ignored by the majority of the civilized world. Society also in the large towns is exceptionally agreeable, and the wealth displayed in many of the great houses is quite startling. Every luxury the heart of man can desire is found in abundance, and if I may presume to say so, in too great abundance. It is enervating and tends to recklessness.

The plague-spot, however, that darkens the land, the black

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drop that embitters personal enjoyment, is the fact that Siberia is a place of punishment. Under existing conditions, real prosperity is well-nigh impossible. Perhaps it is a wholesome lesson to have the sufferings of others brought vividly before one, but if wholesome, it is assuredly most painful. The daily sight of so many miserable and degraded wretches, and the impossibility of aiding them, is a pain as great to-day as it was at the first hour of arrival. Never shall I forget the shock of seeing a gang of convicts on their march.

Soon after my arrival at Y—— we were driving over the steppe, the beautiful illimitable steppe, at this season of the year enamelled with flowers, and fresh with air so pure and vivifying, that the fact of breathing it is like drinking in life. Here, so far towards the extreme north, there is literally no spring. Sunshine and summer arrive together. The earth suddenly awaking from her long sleep, quickly throws off her snowy winter's coverlet, and arises blushing, and perfumed in the flush of renewed youth, and ere many days have passed has decked herself with the myriad flowers that have been cherished in her broad bosom through the long and chilly months. The sun darts his beams into every corner and nook, each ray bringing new beauties into light. The merry summer wind seems laughing as it dances over waving trees and sparkling waters, rustling across vast plains, where it whispers tenderly to the waving grasses that for thousands of miles hail his approach with rapture. The voices of the birds, the voices of the streams as they dash away the ice beneath which they have so long been bound, the murmurs of the wind, are all singing the great hymn of thanksgiving that for centuries Nature sends upwards into the blue vault of the listening Heaven above. Joy, peace, and happiness seem resting upon the earth, when, see, in the far distance a black line is darkening a portion of the horizon. It draws nearer, and the blackness revolves itself into a long train of human beings, intermixed with carts and horsemen.

Presently a wild sorrowful song is borne to us by the wind; so wild and mournful are the tones, that they awe one into fear, so certainly are they the wail of suffering humanity. The band draws near, and our carriage stops. The coachman takes off his hat, no true Russian would ever fail to give this tribute of sympathy to a gang of "unfortunates" as they pass to their place of punishment.

Now the singing ceases, and nought is heard but the trampling

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of men and horses, the rumble of shaking cart-wheels, and—the clanking of chains as the miserable wretches who bear them drag onwards in weary slowness. No sooner does the carriage stop than the convicts nearest to us bare their hideous half-shaven heads, and holding out their caps with obsequious reverence, and in fawning, lamentable tones, beseech our alms in the name of God.

The squalor, the dirt, the scarred faces, the abject misery, the nauseous odours proceeding from the clothes and the unwashed persons of these unhappy ones, combined with the horrible sound of the clanking chains, were sickening beyond description. No long halt, however, can be permitted. Soon is the signal given, whips are cracked, and the dreadful band, with loud cries of thanks and blessings, moves on with more alacrity than before, for now, at the next *ostrog*, or halting-place, they have wherewithal to procure those greatest of luxuries to prisoners, vodka, tobacco, and white bread.

The band numbered several hundred, and truly such a crowd of loathsome wretches was a terrible and revolting sight, but still more piteous was it to see the women with whom the telegas that followed were filled. Haggard and travel-stained, many with infants at their breast, several no doubt innocent of crime, and but following their husbands into exile, no human heart could withstand the mute appeal their dim and suffering eyes expressed. During many an hour of troubled sleep have those hopeless and weary eyes haunted me.

It must, however, be borne in mind that the criminal convicts are not as a class to be pitied. Relatively to the crimes committed the punishments are not severe, and in no other country in the world do the conditions of a released prisoner tend so usefully to his reform, and to his subsequent rehabilitation as a citizen and useful colonist. The hopelessly depraved of course remain in their mire, but those who desire to amend have many chances accorded to them. The terms of imprisonment are seldom long, even life-sentences may be shortened by good conduct, and then instead of the prisoner being cast adrift upon the world, to return probably to his degraded home, and to renewed association with the scene and companions of his crime, he is given a piece of land, and the money he has earned in prison. Other assistance, such as helping to build a house, is frequently given by the Government; thus the prisoner becomes a colonist, free in most respects, save that he is unable to leave the country

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and for some years remains to a certain extent under police supervision.

Many Russians thoroughly conversant with the criminal laws of other lands are persuaded that the Russian system is preferable to long terms of imprisonment, especially when these terms are accompanied by the preliminary period of solitary confinement enforced in England. To those accustomed to live and labour in the open air such rigid isolation inflicts unendurable suffering, and almost any amount of bodily chastisement is more humane than causing mental agonies that result in destruction of the intellect.

These little observations are ventured upon solely with regard to the ordinary class of criminal convicts. I cannot presume to say much respecting the political prisoners. They have my deepest sympathy, not indeed with their cause, scarcely even with their punishment, but on account of the injustice with which these punishments are inflicted.

My sturdy English nature rebels against the secrecy, and consequently against the cruel mockery of justice with which these prisoners are so frequently condemned unheard. The liberty that Russians really need is open, even-handed justice, and no privileges will be of any avail until this first necessity of civilized humanity be accorded to them. Liberty of the press, respecting which so much is said, liberty of speaking, liberty in the practice of professions is as nothing compared to the simple concession each man is entitled to claim of his fellow-men, namely that his cause shall be heard publicly, and that facts alone shall weigh for or against him, irrespective of any influence of money or interested power.

Siberia has been to me for many years a happy home; the pleasure of society there being much enhanced by intercourse with the exiles, very many of whom are persons of culture, position and learning. One cannot doubt that their sorrows and their sufferings have been, alas! too often are, very great; but a good and just Governor can do much to alleviate the hardships of their condition, and I have the joy of knowing that my husband has been foremost amongst those who have thus striven to bring light into their darkness.

Happily the mind soon becomes reconciled to the habits engendered by living in these northern regions, and pleasures are by degrees discovered in that which may be repugnant. For some years the long winters were trying, but the clear air

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is favourable to cheerfulness, and the snow, far from being dreary, is both beautiful and brilliant.

But it must be admitted there is another and a reverse side to the picture. There are regions where man shrinks appalled from the stern desolation, and the solemn evidences of the mighty and unmerciful power of Nature. A nature dark and unfathomable, enwrapping awful secrets in her ice-bound bosom, where night broods in terrific gloom, the death-silence alone broken by the roar of falling icebergs, or the rush of the mighty storm. And such darkness lasts for months, no ray of light piercing the dread gloom, save when the shimmering coruscations of the wondrous Auroras cast a weird glare over the mysterious sight of a world fast bound in an eternal tomb.

Man cannot intrude here long and live. In the far North, Nature, who in more genial climes is a sweet and beneficent mother, has become an awful and inscrutable tyrant, crushing and destroying whatever speaks of or tends to life. In vain man fights and struggles. Surely, steadily, hopelessly, do frost and ice gather around him, and even in death does the North retain her victim, never does she relinquish her grasp. Life is taken, but its wasted shell remains, to be for unnumbered ages a dread memorial of the hopeless and impotent conflict.

My husband's duties obliged him at various times to visit these remote districts. This summer I was to accompany him, hitherto he had refused to allow me to do so. The weather was delightful, and long ere this I had become accustomed to the break-neck speed with which drivers send their hardy little native horses over tracks that in many places are a mere succession of holes, quagmires and rough stones. Sometimes the deep ravines into which we so rapidly descend, and the tremendous precipices that skirt the way, are not a little nerve-shaking; however accidents rarely happen.

And how bright is the sunshine, how pure and blue the sky, how soft the air that is so freshened by the many streams, whose waters and whose vivifying spray are bringing great banks of flowers into life! Earth and air alike seem perfumed. From the birch woods that clothe the sides of these deep valleys comes a strange sweet fragrance that mingles deliciously with the resinous scent of the pines that cover the higher ranges of hills, while every grassy slope is fairly carpeted with flowers, whose brilliant colouring gains in vividness of tint from the deep purple shadows of the clouds that are hanging about the mountain

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peaks. What music also can be sweeter than that made by the waterfalls that are tumbling in lines of glittering foam from these half-hidden summits!

But by and by such soft beauties diminish, and finally disappear as we advance towards the north. Vast and gloomy forests stretch before and around us for thousands of versts. Here and there are tiny clearings belonging to a few lonely huts inhabited by hunters, mostly political exiles, who gain a scanty subsistence by trapping the ermines and blue foxes, whose skins are sold to the traders who visit these districts every year. But gloomy as are these forests, they are cheerful compared to the savage desolation of the land as we advance towards the dread ice-regions. The mountains are now seamed by formidable glaciers, where dark and yawning fissures, and huge rocks, half veiled in rolling vapour, make scenes of wild and startling grandeur. Especially awe-inspiring also are the gaunt cliffs where they rise in black and sullen majesty above the white world of the great snow-fields, of which we can see the horizon-bounded fields extending far towards the north.

But even here vegetation has not ceased, the sun is still struggling to maintain his power, and in sheltered nooks tiny northern flowers may be seen peeping forth amidst the stones and ice, whilst here and there stretches of the succulent moss so loved by reindeer soften in some measure the stern harshness of this northern land. Nevertheless, rugged and lonely as it is, we come from time to time upon straggling villages, where life still seems pleasant to their inhabitants, for there are neat post-houses, and attempts at gardens. Many windows also are actually gay with pots of flowers, but, alas! close by is the guarded *ostrog*, showing that prisoners are here on their way to still more distant and savage regions. These *ostrogs* make the heart ache, so horrible are they in every respect. The lower order of Russians no doubt love dirt, they find it warm, and probably therefore comforting, but in these temporary prisons not only is dirt rampant, but, from the habitual over-crowding caused by want of space, every sanitary law is violated, and the result is frightful beyond description.

Into some of the worst of these places I was not permitted to penetrate. Even in those I entered the air was polluted to a degree that was indescribably dreadful. Carbolic acid is used in large quantities, but the very walls and floorings are now so permeated by poisonous gases, that not only the atmosphere, but the buildings themselves have become pestilential.

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The journey was long, the duties many, the delays therefore frequent, so the season was advancing ere we had arrived at our destination, a large and famous convent as far north as it was possible for human beings to endure the rigour of the Arctic climate. And those who did so endure were women, many nobly born and gently nurtured; nevertheless, they had voluntarily embraced a religious life, where their privations, their duties and sufferings must make existence one stern and never-ending penance. This convent is celebrated throughout the land, not only that its inmates are much venerated, for they are as charitable to others as they are austere towards themselves, but the chapel is a marvel of magnificence, and many are the health-giving miracles attributed to the various shrines. Bands of pilgrims therefore resort here during the few weeks that the convent is accessible, for during the greater portion of the year, snow, ice and floods cut off communication with the outer world.

The short summer of the Polar regions was already on its wane, and the days were shortening rapidly as we drew near this desolate spot. From afar, the gloomy mass of buildings could be perceived standing near the extremity of a dark and narrow valley; on either side were low hills, now partially covered with the grey reindeer-moss, but soon to be again buried beneath winter's snow. Beyond these hills rose lofty granite cliffs, their sides scored by glaciers, and many of their summits covered with glittering ice. In the farther distance appeared the shimmering blink that marks the region of eternal snow.

As we approached them, more and more dismal did the dark walls appear. No gate stood hospitably open to invite the weary traveller to enter for rest and prayer; for this convent is a fortress and a prison, as well as a religious house. The brilliant dome and glittering cross of the great church were caught by some rays of the now declining sun, but these spots of light but added to the gloom that was gathering round the other and less lofty buildings. Most if not all the pilgrims had probably departed, for all was quiet, all was silent in and about the place.

So absolute was the quiet, that it gave the impression that we were drawing near the abode of death; however, our arrival had doubtless been observed, for the great gates opened ere we could make a summons. The intervening space between the outer walls and the main building was neatly cultivated as a garden, but few and stunted were the vegetables that could be prevailed upon to grow in such ungenial climate in such ungenial soil.

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Before us was a small door, which, opening as noiselessly as the gates, gave admittance into a narrow passage, in which stood a tall black figure, straight and rigid as the walls beside her. A serge veil not only covered her coarse black robe, but was so drawn over head and face that it was impossible to see more than the dim outline of a face. Nought of white could be perceived save the well-nigh fleshless fingers that held a bunch of keys. In silence she led us into the presence of the Superior, a kindly, well-bred woman, who we could well believe had in her worldly days been a frequenter of Courts. It seems marvellous that one habituated to the comforts and luxuries of palaces should voluntarily embrace a life of such severe asceticism ; but the head of this house possesses considerable power, besides the control of an immense income, and there are minds so constituted that the possession of power recompenses them for incredible personal privations. Some women doubtless come here to expiate sins committed during years of a worldly, perchance even sinful life, but the good Superior did not appear one of these remorseful Magdalens. Speedily we were supplied with a good and comfortable meal, and shown the rooms, or rather cells assigned to our use. Ere long the bell sounded for the evening office, and we descended to the chapel. Most impressive was the sight, and deeply touching the service. But few lamps illuminated the great chapel, but their star-like light was caught and reflected by the superb jewels that decked every shrine, for the revenues of a kingdom have been lavished on this lonely spot. Weird and spectral was it to see the long line of black-robed figures as they slowly entered, and prostrating themselves humbly before the altar, their motionless forms became absorbed in the deep gloom around. Infinitely tender were the voices that chanted the service, the quivering plaintive tones having lost all trace of earthly joy, dead as they were to all the world holds dear. Fainter and weaker they became, until at last they seemed to float away in the clouds of incense that were rolling around, filling the air with a weight of sweetness until the brain became dimmed to all other objects.

Perhaps this mournful service affected the nerves ; perhaps the long journey, the narrow cell, the bare walls, the hardness of the conventual bed strained too much the already tired frame, but, agitated and restless, I could not sleep. I could but listen to the weird cries of the wind, that was sighing in fitful gusts, moaning and sobbing like a soul in pain, as it rose and fell in

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long melancholy wails, amidst the stern rocks and death-like valleys that stretched around us. At length sleep must have come, but it brought no solace to my troubled and harassed mind. A cruel dream came instead.

Thoughts of my dear young Princess, dead now so many years that even her dear memory was no longer hourly in my remembrance, came back to me with startling vividness. I saw her in all her fresh young beauty on her wedding-day, but as she drove away in her stately carriage, I perceived that she was being taken to no happy earthly home, but to the snow-regions of the deadly north. Vainly I strove to call to her, to warn her of her peril. My paralysed tongue clove to my mouth. No sound could I utter. I struggled to pursue her, to rescue her from the fatal journey. Cruel hands held me back, I was motionless as well as speechless.

Then again I saw her, but now in rags and dirt, suffering, beaten, bruised, one amongst those prisoners of despair on their way to their places of punishment. Now, she has fallen, sinking down dying in the snow, for a whip is raised to strike tha beauteous, shrinking form.

In my agony to aid, to save her, I start up, and then surely, yes surely, there comes to my ears a little song, of which the melody and the touching words had long ago seized her girlish fancy.

"I sigh for Jenny, with the light brown hair!"

Yes, there it was, "I sigh for Jenny—for Jenny!"

I was now awake, wide awake, sitting up in bed, straining with searching, yearning gaze, great beads of perspiration standing on my brow; but I was on no snowfield, still on the little convent bed, all quiet and silent around, save for the sobbing wail of the wind, as it rose and fell in moaning, fitful murmurs.

I sank back, fairly overcome. Tears rained from my eyes. Where was my poor darling now? Not in life, surely not in life, kind death must long ere this have ended her cruel pains. Then a foolish hope, or was it a fear? came to me. Could she be here? All the menial work and hard labour of this great house was done by female prisoners, the majority political convicts. This convent was their prison, their house of correction, and degrading and terrible as such duties must be to nobly born and perchance highly cultured women, yet it was better than being sent as hired servants, or rather slaves, to the public factories, or to private houses. But though without any thought of finding her I loved

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amongst them, I knew my wandering eyes had scanned every face of these unhappy women, and amongst the crowd of hopeless miserable creatures there was not one I had ever seen before. To-day I would, however, search again, and still more carefully, though I felt convinced my darling would have recognized me, even if I had failed to recognize her in her prison dress.

I carried out my intentions.

In the chapel, in the refectory, in all the offices there was not one woman into whose face I did not look enquiringly, searchingly. Every nook, every corner did I visit. The cells of the nuns themselves are sacred, but I was assured that all the sisters were in various portions of the convent, that I had seen them all, and that these cells were therefore empty.

There was a kindness and a simplicity about the nun who was my conductress that was very attractive. I could not doubt her, there was no desire to conceal anything ; but as I was leaving one of the galleries into which the dormitories opened, suddenly there was a sharp weak cry that subsided into feeble sobs, and amidst these sobs I could hear words, English words.

Oh—just Heaven! Strange and unearthly as was the voice, I could distinguish—

> "I sigh for Jenny,
> And my heart beats low."

I heard no more. I flew back to the door whence the sounds proceeded.

"Open," I said authoritatively.

The nun stared at me inquisitively, and hesitated a little, though there was no effort at concealment.

"Her Excellency will not care to enter here. There is only a poor imbecile who knows no one—a grievous case, very sad to see."

I was speechless with choking agony. In another instant I was within the cell beside the bed.

Oh! dear Heaven, could this be her? My beauteous Princess, my fairy happy pupil! This old faded woman, whose grey locks hung in miserable disorder over yellow and shrunken cheeks. The wizened hands were clawing at the bed-coverings, while in vague, disjointed accents she was crooning to herself, sometimes breaking into a wild cry, that again sunk into trembling sobs.

As I fell on my knees beside her, her eyes opened, and turned full upon me. The skin around was puckered and drawn, but

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the glorious blue of those once beautiful orbs was still there, though, alas! no sign of recognition was in them. But ever and again came the piteous wail, and the trembling lips went on with the little song, though there was no understanding that she they called upon was near. I rained kisses upon that poor, scarred and altered face; I clasped her hands, and pressed them to my heart in hopeless, unutterable love. Those little hands, once so white and perfect in their young, fresh beauty, now hardened and horny from severe and cruel toil.

The good nun looked on in piteous sympathy.

"Her Excellency knows this poor creature?"

"Yes, yes," I sobbed. "I know her and love her well. Has she been long like this?"

"Only of late years. Not so when she first came, though always very sorrowful. But the work and life were too hard for one who had been, it was said, a very great lady, and then orders came that she was dangerous, and was to be kept '*au secret*,' and that made the poor brain go. But we have done what we could, and I think we have made her happy as far as was possible. Now her time for departure is very near. The Holy Mother is about to take her to herself."

It was so. The day of departure was at hand, nay the very hour was drawing near, for already convulsions were shaking the exhausted frame.

She knew me not, but on my bosom should that frail life depart.

I sent to my husband, and heard from him that we might remain until the end. Yes, even until the end, for it could not be far off. Many came to help and pity, but I wanted neither help nor pity. I alone would hold her. My straining eyes alone should watch the kindly death-shadow fall upon the clay that now was scarce the likeness even of her I loved. I think she felt content when my arms encircled her. Even during the strong spasms that from time to time racked the dying frame, I think she knew that one who loved her was near, but ere long these terrible fits ceased. Then came lethargy, and for some hours nought was heard save the choking breath of the sufferer. Still even in these last moments ever and anon were slowly faltered the pathetic words—

"I pine for Jenny."

God alone knows how my soul was torn and distracted as I

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heard this faint and piteous appeal, and looked upon the wreck made by man's gross selfishness and cruelty! May He forgive the wild longing for revenge that came over me as I looked upon the ruin, the scarred and soulless ruin of the once fair and brilliant creature, whose promising young life had been thus ruthlessly done to death.

Ere night fell, the struggle was nearly at an end.

The gasping breaths came slower and slower; at length the dear head fell back with one sharp, quick, convulsive effort. Then some one laid her back upon the narrow bed, and drew a covering up over the livid face.

It was just before the midnight mass that we carried her into the chapel, and clothed in the rough black robe and coarse garments of the order, laid her at the foot of the great altar.

When the coming day should dawn she would be placed in a nameless grave, and none would ever know that the poor toil-worn servant of the convent had once been the beautiful, wealthy and powerful Princess Ariane Karàsoumoff. The kind ones around let me remain until the last minute. I know not when that was, for a merciful unconsciousness was then easing my aching heart.

When the early dawn was tinging the stern rocks and mountains with its faint and pallid light, we had already left the convent, and as we travelled onwards, the sighing wind bore from time to time to our ears the solemn quivering toll of the chapel bell, saying that one within those walls was being laid in her last and most dreary resting-place.

* * * * *

It is the middle of August, and the heat is intense, intense even to those accustomed to the trying oppression of a Russian summer. The sun has for hours been streaming garishly over the treeless fields and heated plains, and now the very air itself seems exhausted, so overpowering is the glaring brilliancy of the scorching and pitiless sunshine. Save for the drowsy hum of innumerable insects, all living things are drooping in so fiery an atmosphere, withering beneath a heat that absolutely pulverises the earth and all upon it. Nevertheless, regardless of personal suffering, regardless even of danger, a group of peasants have assembled in the great courtyard of the Karàsoumoff villa. With streaming eyes and entreating gestures, they are imploring admittance to the presence of their Lord.

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The Dvornik is compassionate. Many of the petitioners are his relatives, he looks upon them with pitying eyes.

"Go, go!" he says, "it is of no use, he will not see you." But the old man at the head of the group will not be repulsed, he clasps his hands, tears stream from his eyes, as he sobs,

"Nay, nay, Ivan Ivanovitch, in the name of God make him see us. He is our Lord, he is our Father; he cannot deny us, he must have mercy."

The wretched people press round the porter. They try to clutch his coat. He repulses them, and this time somewhat roughly; but some are still clinging to him as the great door at the end of the court opens, and a gentleman appears.

Tall, handsome, and eminently distinguished in appearance, there is something in the almost feminine delicacy and beauty of his features that might inspire confidence and even love at first sight, but for the calm, cold glitter of the singularly pale-blue eyes. Eyes that have the cruel calmness of a snake. Eyes that fascinate while they terrify in their gaze of passionless cruelty.

"Dog!" he says, as he strikes the porter sharply with his stick, "how darest thou let these curs come here? How darest thou let them trouble me? Here take these fellows," he continues, pointing to the porter and to the old man, and turning to some servants who have followed, "and let them have twenty strokes of the rods apiece."

The trembling wretches, without any attempt at remonstrance or resistance, allow themselves to be led away, and in a few minutes their cries are heard resounding through the air as their punishment is being administered. Notwithstanding this cruel answer to the prayers they are about to make, the women (and the petitioners are mostly women) will not be repulsed. With sobs and tears, and choking utterances, they appeal for mercy. Wives and mothers grovel on the ground, beating their breasts in the anguish of their entreaties.

"My little Nadja," sobs one unhappy mother, "think, dear, gracious Lord, how young she is! but a child, still but a little child! You cannot, no you cannot let her . . ." but a very convulsion of grief prevents her saying more.

It is said that a savage beast may perchance show mercy. A madman has even been softened by the sight of a woman's tears, but the hardened selfish heart of man glories in its ruthless power. Unmoved, the Prince (for this is the mighty Governor

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of the Province) looks upon the miserable crowd. Coolly he scans each upturned face. Then his eyes rest upon that of Nadja's mother, and they quiver with a sharp and snake-like glitter as they grow harder and more merciless. A mocking smile curls his lip.

"Your little Nadja is very young? She is dear to you? She is your only one?"

"Yes, yes, dear Lord, she is very young, my only one, my little darling!" moans the mother, though a shadow of hope is gathering in her tones as she speaks.

"Good," says the Prince, "then in her I crush the last of a viper's brood. Go," he continues, turning to a Cossack who, booted and spurred, is awaiting his pleasure. "Mount and be off. You have the orders. Do not draw rein until you have delivered them at the prison."

Then to the trembling wretches before him. "Begone, vile scum!" he cries, "you have your answer. Go and see your traitorous spawn strung up by the hangman's hands, and look upon their flesh ere the crows can seize their portion."

Without vouchsafing another glance, he turns upon his heel, and no sooner is he gone, than the miserable creatures who have flocked hither to implore his mercy, are driven with blows through the court-yard, and then beyond the gates.

* * * * *

Hope has been destroyed, but vengeance is arising from its ashes. Tears no longer moisten eyes grown bright and savage in the keen ardour for revenge,

Towards evening, however, calm seems restored. Men again lead their horses from the stables, women resume their work in the steaming fields. To all appearance life in that village is the same as it was yesterday, and had been for many previous days, but, unobserved, messengers have been stealing away to other villages in the same district or *mir*, as it is called. Watchwords have passed. Signals have been made, and without apparent outward movement, a terrible convulsion, a menacing upheaval of the masses, is rapidly approaching.

The great heat of the day as night falls culminates in a storm. The roar of the thunder is deafening. It well-nigh drowns the groans of old Yartisch, who is lying upon his face in his wretched cabin, his bruised and suffering back covered with wet rags. After applying this remedy, no one takes more trouble about him. Most of the men present have experienced the

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suffering, and know that patience and cold water are the only remedies.

The men and women assembled to-night in this hut are peasants. Peasants who have long been humble, deferential, forbearing; but a time arrives when the most humble, the most enduring, will bear no more, when they will no longer bow beneath the burden laid upon them.

That moment has come, and though but few words are spoken, those few are uttered with the savage accents of human beings, in whose hearts the passions of angry beasts are arising. The savage thirst of vengeance has now seized them, a thirst that can only be assuaged by blood. Strong, however, as is that craving, furious as is the passionate longing for revenge, irresolution is apparent on every countenance. Not a man will take the lead. Not a man has aught definite to propose. With muttered curses the meeting to-night might have dispersed, all decisive measures vaguely deferred, had not the door been pushed open by Marfa, who enters hurriedly, followed by an aged man. It is now raining in torrents, and a rush of wind and rain almost blow the new-comers into the room. Marfa drops on her knees beside old Yartisch, and while again moistening the rags that ease the burning pain of his tortured back, whispers in his ear,

"You were right, father. He is here. I have found him. He will save her. The messenger was stopped. The orders are destroyed."

The aged man who has arrived with Marfa is now in the centre of the group. But aged no longer. Wig and coverings thrown aside, a young eager face appears, intellectual in the fiery look of the bright and somewhat deeply sunken eyes, resolute and masterful in the shape of the stern mouth and square, powerful jaw. The women crowd around him, kissing his hands, hot tears dropping fast upon them as they do so. The young fellow looks steadily on the anxious faces, and something dims the bright eyes and makes the strong mouth quiver, as he notices their sorrowing and suffering aspect.

"I have been waiting," he says, and the sonorous voice gives new life and vigour to all who hear; "I knew that the hour was near, and that the end was nigh. Dost think," he continued, turning to Marfa, "that He who rideth upon the clouds and ruleth the Heavens aright, will all unmoved see the blood of your innocent child, and that of hundreds of victims, shed to glut the passions of one tyrant? Nay, but He appointeth

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men unto vengeance, and lo! we are here and we are ready. Is there one amongst us so base, that he is not eager to peril his own poor life to save those who are to die to-morrow by the hangman's hands? Nay see," he cries excitedly, pointing to old Yartisch and another human bundle that lay beside him, "see those men, beaten well-nigh to death, because they have the hearts of men, and not the savage soul of a merciless beast like that accursed Prince. But to-day the Lord has delivered him into our hand. To-night he dies the death appointed unto him, and to-morrow we appeal to our Father on earth, the Czar."

The tears and sobs of the women, the clenched hands and deep oaths of the men are the answers he receives. The deed to be done to-night has long been determined on, and planned. Years of oppression, years of cruelty have hardened the hearts of the oppressed, and now the wholesale executions ordered for the morrow have driven the unhappy relatives of the sufferers to desperation. A daring deed to-night may perchance save them, and revenge they must and will have.

A favourable opportunity has long been waited for—that opportunity has come. It is here. A renowned leader is amongst them; he has dared unnumbered perils to be amongst them, and now the unjust blows inflicted upon the hapless Ivan have delivered to them the great, the supreme chance.

The keys of every gate and door are on the person of the porter.

Surely, too, Heaven itself is aiding their cause, for the howling storm is raging with steadily increasing violence, and the fury of the elements is giving strength to the fury of the Avengers of Blood.

* * * * *

The storm is raging with undiminished power; but all the inhabitants of the villa, with one exception, are sleeping in absolute unconsciousness not only of the fury of the elements, but of the fury of human passions that are gathering in intensity as hours pass.

The Prince is smoking in his cabinet. Occasionally he glances over papers that lie before him, signing some, and impatiently pushing others aside.

His is a face that years have changed but little. The regular, rigid features are perhaps a trifle more rigid in their exceeding delicacy of outline, but no thread of white mars the beauty of the hair, still as abundant and as waving as in days of yore. But the

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eyes have hardened, the cold blue of youth has now turned into the suspicious quivering grey, so surely indicative of stern middle age. The mouth cannot be seen, the thick moustache hides it from sight, but, when angered, the white teeth gleam beneath the fringe, and not unfrequently gnaw the lower lip until blood spouts forth under the sharp white fangs. Woe to him who causes this ebullition of temper!

Whatever the cause, the Prince is now in one of his worst moods. He is not of a nature to bear reproof, and possibly his anger is kindled by certain letters from headquarters. He has long been aware that the wholesale executions in his province must eventually provoke scrutiny, and probably reprimand; but the proud obstinacy of his race, and the vindictive hatred that is his individual peculiarity, have driven him onwards in a course that he had not originally intended to adopt. He had, in fact, this very morning hesitated, but the sight of Marfa, who but rarely comes into his presence, has inflamed his anger into new fury, and the papers he has had to revise to-night have brought to his mind thoughts and recollections that stab him with the sharp burning pain of a scorpion's sting.

It is strange to him to be thus disturbed. His hard and selfish nature is but little capable of experiencing emotion of any kind. Even love has been to him but a temporary and passing gratification. By nature and education habitually self-indulgent, a passion gratified has ever been quickly sated. It is by opposition alone that his feelings become excited, alike for love or for revenge. It is opposition that is now inflaming his torpid blood. It is opposition to his orders, or to his will that is now exciting him to fury. Hence his savage sternness, his tyrannous severity towards those who have contravened his will, and indeed his edicts. Hence the bloodshed and the punishments that, as he well knows, have made his name a byword throughout the land.

Still that very knowledge nerves him onwards to still more ruthless deeds. He has convinced himself that it is his duty to guard his power with even despotic vigilance, and he is determined to strengthen his might in the unhappy district over which he rules. Why then does he falter to-night? Why is it that the scene to be enacted on the coming morn will force itself before him with all its hideous details?

He feels no pity. He knows not what pity means. He has never felt it, and now those about to die are peculiarly obnoxious to him. He is no coward, either mentally or bodily, and therefore

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makes no effort to compromise even to himself whatever course of action he thinks fit to pursue. He knows that he has thrown the weight of his authority, has even strained the law to secure the condemnation of several of the accused. Little recks he that it is so. He cares nought for the opinion of others. He cares not that his own conscience, such as it is, condemns him. Why, therefore, is he to-night so disturbed, so restless, with an uneasiness that weighs upon him in spite of every effort to subdue it?

In vain he smokes. In vain he has recourse to the absinthe, of which he is now an habitual drinker. At last the opium-pipe procures comparative quiet. Quiet, but not rest. To-night the soothing drug gives no foretaste of Elysium.

He dreams, and his dreams are of the raging sea. The waves are howling and roaring around him. In vain he seeks to escape; the pitiless waters are closing over his head. Oh God, for a breath of air! His heaving lungs are choking beneath the pressing weight. Great beads of pain and terror stand thick upon his forehead as he awakes, uttering a sharp cry of horror and alarm.

But this is no dream. Is the raging sea indeed encompassing him round about? Nay, that deep and threatening roar is far more terrible in its import than aught made by any element, and bodes still deeper wrath. The roar of a savage multitude is sounding in his ears. Those howls of execration and hatred come from the throats of men who are thirsting for the doomed wretch's life.

He staggers to his feet, choking as he rises, for a dense smoke is pouring in upon him on every side.

He rushes to the doors; all are closed and securely locked.

The windows! He can escape that way, for they open on a spacious balcony. But even his iron nerves are shaken, and he shrinks back appalled, for beneath is a sea of savage faces; faces that tell of unquenchable hate, even more certainly than the infuriated voices that are clamouring for his life.

And now even above the cries rises a solemn chant; the death chant of the Zealots of the Old Religion.

"The Lord looked down from Heaven, that He might hear the mournings of such as are in captivity, and deliver the children appointed unto death. But the enemies of the Lord shall perish. In the name of the Lord we will destroy them."

For a second he cowers back, for a second a strange mist comes

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before his eyes. Is the fear of death in hideous shape upon him?

No; no fear is there.

As a flash of light, that torpid blood, now thoroughly aroused, pours like a flame of fire through heart and brain, and raging anger urges him to defy.

"Dogs! cowards!" he shouts, "you dare to threaten me! You dare think I fear such scum as you! Die, dogs! and go to that Hell where I have already sent so many of you!"

A howl of rage, but of rage not unmingled with fear, greets his words; but ere that howl has ceased, like lightning he has discharged many of the barrels of his revolver straight upon the upturned faces beneath him.

As he does so he springs from the balcony, and exerting the utmost power of his magnificent strength he clears the nearest band of assailants, and is making his way rapidly towards the stables.

Can he throw himself on one of his favourite horses he may yet defy his foes.

He has crossed the terrace.

Thank Heaven, the stable door is open! He can even see the horses within. One more rush and he is there.

Within that door is safety—life. But he has not noticed a crowd of women and children who, carrying blazing brands, are rapidly advancing from the village.

The light, the glare, are dazzling him; he falters, but the women see, and with a shriek of fury they rush to intercept his way. As they do so some of the foremost hurl full at the escaping wretch the burning wood they carry. One log strikes him on the temple. Blood rushes from the wound as he falls unconscious, and the women, maddened partly by hate, partly by fear, approach somewhat nearer, but not to aid. In their terror, in their hate, in their very horror at the dreadful sight, rapidly do they cast upon him the heavy masses of faggots and the burning torches with which they have armed themselves. Fiercely do the red flames mount high into the air, and the crowd, affrighted, rush away.

At length all is over. Nought but the gaunt skeletons of blackened beams and mounds of smouldering ashes mark where stood the stately villa. The storm has died away, and the moon is now throwing her clear and pellucid light over the hideous scene of destruction. But even the soft night breeze that has succeeded the howling wind is still raising showers of fine dust

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from the not yet extinct embers, and these grey clouds falling upon the orange and lemon trees that still remain, are blotting out all traces of the once fair garden.

How many human beings perished that night has never accurately been ascertained.

The peasants have retreated, glorying in their work, and still from time to time the sighing breeze brings some distinct notes of the wild hymn of the Zealots,

> "For He has delivered the oppressor into our hands.
> He has cast down the mighty from their seat, and has exalted the humble and meek. . . ."

* * * * *

But what is this black mass lying in the great court-yard? A mass from which smoke and sometimes sparks continue to ascend?

The smouldering pile is close to the stable door, so close indeed that the volumes of smoke rushing from it have suffocated the poor frightened animals within. They are dead, no living creature can be here, yet why do some of the faggots thus move and heave?

At length from beneath the expiring embers creeps forth a scarred and gory wretch. Surely this mass of burnt flesh cannot be alive?

There is not a human being near to say one pitying word to the miserable creature, who, blind, scorched and bleeding, staggers forth from his place of torture into the clear and delicate moonlight.

Pitifully he extends those charred and helpless hands, craving the compassion that will never come to him in this world. He staggers forward, but stumbles and falls. Again he makes an effort, and creeps onwards on hands and knees, feeling his way as best he may, but as he raises his sightless face, his head strikes against a staple in the wall.

With a deep groan of suffering and despair he falls. And falls to rise no more.

In solitary agony Alexis Karàsoumoff expires beneath the very iron to which years before he had fastened the innocent little animal that he had tortured to death in like manner for his own cruel pleasure.

"Vengeance is mine. I will repay, said the Lord."

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SOCIAL BATH IN THE LAST CENTURY.

BY MRS. A. PHILLIPS.

AUTHOR OF "BENEDICTA," "MAN PROPOSES," &c.

CHAPTER V.

IN Social Bath of the last century Ralph Allen's mansion at Prior Park was something more than what is popularly known as a gentleman's seat. It might almost have been styled an "academy of letters," for the genial and appreciative nature of the owner drew within its walls some of England's foremost men of culture. In its shady groves Pope was so familiar a figure, that his name has been given to a portion of the grounds he frequented. Around Allen's hospitable board at Prior Park there gathered, at one time or another, most of England's notabilities, from the Prince of Wales to Quin the actor. Here were to be seen Pope, Lord Chesterfield, Warburton, the Fieldings—brother and sister—William Pitt (Earl of Chatham), Richard Graves, for many years rector of Claverton (where Allen now lies buried) and author of the "Spiritual Quixote"—a book that made a considerable stir at the time; Shenstone the poet, and friend of Graves; Hurd, the gentle divine of whom George III. is reported to have said "he was the most naturally polite man he had ever known;" Horace Walpole, Bishop Butler, the Hartleys—father and son—with countless others too numerous to catalogue further, to say nothing of the many notable women of royalty, rank, fashion, and learning, from Princess Amelia to excellent Sarah Fielding—Fielding's sister—who was a resident in Bath, earning her living by writing and teaching.

Ralph Allen in appearance is described as a man of medium height, with an earnest expression of countenance, whose benevolence of nature declared itself in his manner and bearing; a born gentleman, evidently, whose breeding was rarely at fault

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and whose attention and hospitality, therefore, were as gracious as they were acceptable to all sorts and conditions of society in Bath. But there were those in the city who, watching its social events as they passed, were not slow to declare that Allen was the dupe of those to whom he so generously opened his heart and home. We have seen how Pope used him; Warburton has also been accused of making Allen his tool, and by no less a person than William Pitt, who was not alone in this opinion. Quin the actor was anything but partial to Warburton for obvious reasons. "The player" in the last century—when Christian burial was denied to Molière—was in the eyes of the Churchman what the worm is to the angler—the devil's bait to lure souls to the hook of destruction. Conscious of his gifts, Quin resented this wholesale condemnation of his vocation, and thought he discerned the hypocrite beneath the mask of the Bishop. He never lost an opportunity of breaking lances in a war of wits with Warburton, and many an anecdote remains of how in the tilt the actor overthrew the bishop.

One evening at Prior Park a curious scene took place between Quin and Warburton, for liberal-minded Ralph Allen welcomed Quin to his house as a guest to be honoured. On this occasion, Warburton—who, we presume, would have felt that he had forfeited his prelacy, to say nothing of heaven, had he been seen at the theatre—asked Quin to give them a recitation from Shakespeare. Quin replied that his memory failed him, and he dare not trust to it for one of these plays; but he thought he might be able to give them an extract from "Venice Preserved." The offer was readily accepted. Standing up in the midst of the assembled company, Quin then declaimed the part in which the following lines occur—

> "Honest men
> Are the soft cushion on which Knaves
> Repose and fatten!"

This he did so pointedly that there was no mistaking the intended allusion. Suiting the action to the words, he turned to Allen as he said "Honest men," and to Warburton as he uttered "knaves." The scene produced quite a sensation among the guests, and Warburton did not, it may be conjectured, again tempt the actor to give them any further recitations.

Most people were agreed in their good opinion of Ralph Allen. It was left to Fielding, however, to immortalize him

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under the character of Squire Allworthy in his novel of 'Tom Jones.'

Looking down from the mansion of Prior Park one may see the Manor-house and Church of Widcombe, which are among the most interesting and picturesque features of Bath. The house, which is situated in a lovely valley commanding the most exquisite scenery, was built by Inigo Jones. It was in this house that the fictitious Tom Jones is supposed to have wooed Sophia Western. A picture of the original of Sophia Western, we have been reliably told, hangs in one of the rooms; but the young lady in question did not share Sophia's ultimate fate, as she was drowned in the ornamental water adjoining the house. There is a popular belief that Fielding drew his character of Squire Western from Mr. Bennett, the gentleman who occupied the manor in Fielding's day, when the novelist was staying with his sister, who lived in Yew Cottage—now Widcombe Lodge—next door to the Manor-house. But Mr. Bennett is described as a very different person to Squire Western; and although 'Tom Jones' was written mostly in Bath, we have it on the authority of Mr. Cradock, in his literary memoirs, that several of the characters in 'Tom Jones' were taken from the family of the Boothby's, of Tooley Park in Leicestershire, with whom Fielding was intimate.

But why suppose Fielding to be a copyist only? Like many novelists, he may have sketched a locality which he peopled with beings of his own creation. Readers are too fond of trying to find originals for their favourites in fiction, thus denying to the novelist that power of imagination which creates rather than copies. The truest art is a compound of the real with the ideal, and many of our most famous characters in fiction consist of various qualities engrafted on persons borrowed possibly from living sources, but by no means intended to be portraits of the originals. The novelist adopts a personality or selects a locality as a suitable form in which to embody the soul of his idea. Fielding chose Widcombe Manor as the scene for his fiction, and possibly the external forms of its master and his daughter for his characters; but when, for the development of his plot, a Squire Western was requisite, he lodged the characteristics of a rough-tongued, brutal father, in the form of the Squire, to act as a foil to the gentle Sophia and her lover Tom.

The creative faculty is a mysterious gift involving a great deal more than novelists are ordinarily aware of; as it brings them

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"en rapport" with influences which very often control them instead of being controlled; as when, in the development of a plot, the characters will at times act their parts quite independently of their author's original intention, an experience to which many authors have borne testimony.

Fielding was introduced to Allen by his sister, Miss or Mistress Sarah Fielding, who lived in Yew Cottage. She was the intimate friend and neighbour of Allen, who thought so highly of her abilities, and her efforts to maintain herself by them, that he generously gave her an annuity of one hundred pounds a year, and remembered her in his will for a legacy. Like her brother, she was a novelist, and wrote a work called 'David Simple,' at a time when women writers were as rare as now they are plentiful.

"Her sex she taught," so says her epitaph on a tablet raised to her memory in Bath Abbey, by her friend Bishop Hoadly, who, among other things, says—

> "Her unaffected manners, candid mind,
> Her heart benevolent, and soul resigned,
> Were more her praise than all she knew or thought,
> Though Athen's wisdom to her sex she taught."

Lively Fanny Burney, a generation later, wandering through the Bath Valhalla, exclaims on reading this, "I wonder if any bishop will ever say as much for me when I die!"

Sarah Fielding was devoted to her brother and he to her. She was the harbour of refuge to whom he fled when pursued, as he often was, by debts and difficulties. Her little home, Yew Cottage, sheltered him at these times, and it was on one of these occasions that the sister introduced him to Ralph Allen, who at once became Fielding's friend while he lived, and remembered him and his children in his will when he died.

Fielding repaid the obligation with the only coin with which he was liberally supplied—a generous and grateful heart prompting a pen of genius. With these he painted the character of Allworthy, avowedly and of purpose taken from Allen. There is point and delicacy in the selection of the name ALL . . . *worthy*, which conveyed a compliment in itself to the man he desired to honour and thank. In 'Joseph Andrews' Allen is again introduced. Joseph says of the owner of Prior Park: "Some gentlemen of our cloth report charitable actions done by their lords and masters, and I have heard Squire Pope, the great poet at my lady's table, tell stories of a man that lived . . . at Bath, one Al— Al— I forget

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his name, but it is in the book of verses. This gentleman has built up a stately mansion, too, which the Squire likes well. But his charity is seen further than his house, though it stands on a hill ; aye, and brings him more honour too."

This tribute contains a lurking sarcasm on Pope, while doing honour to Allen, as if Fielding was glad to be able to say in retaliation for the offensive epithet of "low-born" that Pope was very ready to take advantage when he could of Allen's hospitalities, and to testify that the object of the verse was a man whose character rivalled the sumptuous spectacle of his dwelling.

Notwithstanding the good prices he received for his books, Fielding was always more or less in difficulties from his reckless mode of living. 'Tom Jones,' however, was nearly being sacrificed in one of his impecunious fits for the sum of £25. The publisher fortunately asked for a day to consider if he could risk such a sum, and Fielding in the meantime met Thomson the poet, to whom he told the transaction. Thomson scorned the idea of Fielding parting with his brains for such a sum, and offered to get him better terms, but Fielding felt himself partly pledged. Never did author wait more anxiously on a publisher hoping to be accepted than did Fielding hoping to be refused. He was refused! Joyfully he carried his manuscript to Thomson to fulfil his promise. The poet introduced Fielding to Andrew Miller, who handed the book over to his wife to read. She discerned its merits and advised her husband to keep it. Over a pleasant dinner, given by Miller to Fielding and Thomson, the bargain was made which secured Fielding, to his great delight, £200 for the story. Miller is said to have cleared £18,000 by 'Tom Jones,' out of which he paid Fielding, from time to time, various sums to the amount of £2000, bequeathing him also a handsome legacy.

Mention has been made of the friendship that existed between Allen and William Pitt. They fell out, oddly enough, over a word. The word was "adequate." The breach was never healed, although Allen, as if to send a message of peace and goodwill in death, bequeathed Pitt a legacy of £1000 in these words:

"For the last instance of my friendly and grateful regards for the best of friends as well as the most upright and ablest of ministers that has adorned our country, I give to the Right Honourable William Pitt the sum of One Thousand Pounds, to be disposed of by him to any of his children that he may please to appoint." Pitt had a house, No. 7, in the Circus built for him by Wood

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in 1755. He represented Bath in Parliament for many years, and was idolized by Allen and the Corporation. It is not out of place to mention Allen in juxtaposition with the Corporation of Bath as he was at all times its most influential member, which provoked some one to call it the "One-headed Corporation." The offence which Pitt took to the word "adequate" arose out of a fervid address of congratulation which the Corporation of Bath sent to the King when peace instead of war was declared between Spain and England. The Corporation styled it an "adequate and advantageous peace," or, as we of a later day would have said, "Peace with Honour." Pitt was strenuously opposed to this "peace," and regarded the address, coming from the people of Bath, as little short of a vote of censure on their representative in Parliament, who considered the peace most "inadequate," so he said. A correspondence ensued between Allen and Pitt on the subject, which was published in the *Bath Chronicle* of June 1763, from which we gather this extract from one of Pitt's letters:

"There are few things can give me more real concern than to find my notion of the public good differ so widely from those of the man whose goodness of heart and private virtues I shall ever love."

As a facsimile of the same address as that sent by the people of Bath was forwarded also from the Cathedral of Gloucester, Pitt attributed the obnoxious wording of it to the pen of Warburton. The Bishop denied the accusation. Pitt had made him a Bishop, and he was anxious to set himself right with his patron, but to no purpose, as Pitt wrote him the following stiff reply:

"I will only venture to observe, my Lord, that the Cathedral of Gloucester, which certainly does not stand alone in true duty and wise zeal towards His Majesty, has, however, the fate not to be imitated by any other Episcopal See in the Kingdom in this unaccustomed effusion of fervent congratulations on the Peace."

It is to be hoped that in the covert sting of this reply from his patron the good Bishop was made to feel some of the pain he had inflicted upon the unfortunate "enthusiast" by his letter already quoted.

Nowhere do we get more striking pictures of the social life of the last century than from the Memoirs of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delaney, an accomplished gentlewoman of the highest distinction who was justly celebrated for her beauty and intelligence, and no less distinguished by the cordiality of disposition. Born in the year 1700 and living until 1788, she almost embraced the

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experience of the century. She frequently visited Bath, as did most of her friends, and they spoke and wrote of it nearly always as "the Bath." Quaint pictures of social customs abound in these Memoirs, one of which is very amusing. It was the custom when a man wanted to get married for him to call in the aid of a friend to "assist" him by "recommending" him to a young lady. The delicate task was undertaken by some "best-man" sort of friend, who duly recounted the parentage, education, fortune, and prospects of the would-be suitor to the young lady, who then consulted her friends. If he was thought eligible, matters were allowed into wooing. It was called being "assisted to marry"! The idea is worthy of reproduction to those it may concern, and certainly is preferable to the modern "advertisement." Distracted parents with marriageable daughters, and wandering bachelors, are often at a loss to know how to combine. "The assister" would be a valuable medium, and it might prove an interesting vocation in life to some of the unemployed who are slowly dying of ennui! They might, by a judicious selection, bring the right people together, and thus prevent much misery that now takes place for want of "assistance"! Bath was quite a theatre for these "assisted" marriages, as parents brought their daughters to its gaieties as to a fair, to display their beauty—adorned in pretty "night-clothes"—at the balls; "night-clothes" being the last-century name for an evening dress.

The period of the sixties in Bath was one of social transition. The celebrities of the earlier part of the century who had contributed so much to its splendour were now grown old, and one by one dying off, while the younger celebrities had not come forward. The first to go was Nash, whose abnormally long reign of nearly sixty years had extended far beyond his limits of usefulness, while the gaieties of the town suffered and lost tone with the decrepitude of its leading member. Our poor old Beau had long become a burden to himself and a trial to his friends. It never answers to outlive one's popularity. Human nature, taken seriously, has very little gratitude. The public—the fashionable public especially—are apt to treat old servants as they treat their old dancing shoes—fling them away when they have trodden them out. It was thus the Bath public treated Nash. The walls of his house of cards began to fall about his ears at last, and his old age, as with the old age of all old beaus, was a tragic comedy to witness. Its first act was, unhappily, an Act of Parliament of a very stringent nature, prohibiting gaming

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tables in every form, in the hope of suppressing gambling. Those who lost or won ten pounds at play at one time were liable to be indicted within six months after the offence was committed, and to be fined five times the amount for the good of the poor. Further, any one who turned King's evidence against another could have their gambling sins remitted.

Thus did Nash see all his means of earning an "honest" living suddenly snatched away. Hitherto he had been secretly in league with the keepers of these gambling hells in Bath, and now, instead of being able to enforce his gains, he had to trust to their honour and generosity, both of which failed him. And so the poor old King, grown old and irritable in the service of pleasure, suddenly found himself "out in the cold." How was he to live and keep up his establishment, his regal coach-and-six, his many charities? An occasional ball for the benefit of the Master of the Ceremonies would not do it.

A law suit was his only resource. It was a desperate remedy, since it involved proclaiming publicly the secret he had so long and carefully guarded; but no other way was open to him. He accordingly filed a bill in Chancery against his confederates, and thus disclosed not only his source of income, but the infamous part he had been playing throughout his career. While posing as the generous protector of those who frequented the gaming tables, he had all the while been baiting the trap and sharing the spoil! The public was outraged at the scandal. Slanders of all kinds rained thick and fast upon him and the tide of favour completely turned. His condition was desperate. With pitiable agitation he flew to his "torpedo" (as it will be remembered he called his pen) for defence, writing and distributing daily handbills, which he caused to be printed, refuting the charges brought against him. "What a falling off was there!" To see this man reduced to circulating his defence among the company who had ere while trembled at his word and fawned for his good will! One of these handbills shows the influence left upon his mind by Lady Huntingdon, and reads like a fragment of one of Whitfield's sermons. The terror wrought on his own mind by the idea of hell-fire, he now used as a formidable threat to inspire his enemies with a wholesome dread! The handbill is entitled, "A MONITOR" and is headed by the text "*The Lord hateth lying lips.*"

"The curse denounced in my motto," he writes, "is sufficient to intimidate any person who is not quite abandoned in their evil ways, and who have any fear of God before their eyes; everlasting

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burnings are a terrible *reward* (*sic*) for their misdoings, and nothing but the most hardened sinners will oppose the judgments of heaven without end. . . . But there are joys in heaven. . . ."

Nash quoting the joys of heaven to silence his detractors and support his claim at law to a share in a disreputable gambling transaction is rather more than we can enlarge upon. Poor old Beau! What form did the "joys of heaven" take in his mind, we wonder? A glorified Assembly Room filled with the *élite* of Society, over whom he should reign as Master of Ceremonies? His mind from long habit could conceive no other, as the joys of a methodistical heaven of perpetual psalmody and eternal sermons, one of the ideas of heaven in those days, were not attractive, and certainly would not have inspired Nash. Still, the echo of the sermon proclaiming the fact of hell-fire for his enemies was what he gratefully caught at; and he hurled the lighted torch among them, enjoying their anticipated doom for having defamed him.

Quin the actor, who had at one time been Nash's friend, is believed to have tried to supplant him as Master of the Ceremonies, and is supposed to have written the following ill-spelt letter—which he sent through a friend to the nobleman whose patronage he solicited. The friend made a copy of it and sent it to Nash, who had it printed and circulated, and was from henceforth Quin's bitter enemy. It is amusing and valuable as a picture of Nash as others saw him then.

"Old beaux Knash," the letter says, "has mead himself so diss-agreeable to all the Companey that comes here to Bath that the corperatian of this city have it now under thier consideration to remove him from being master of the cereymonies, should he be continuead the inhabitants of this city will be rueind, as the best companey declines to come to Bath on his acc^{t}." The writer then proceeds to tell how at the first ball of the season, which was last "Tus'day," a young lady was asked to dance a minuet, but begging to be excused, old Knash cried out before the whole room and with a dreadful oath demanded "what business she had at the ball if she did not mean to dance," which so frightened her that she rose and danced. But the rest of the company marked their disapproval by refusing to dance "a minueat that night." The writer declares that in the country dances no one of note danced except Lords S. and T.—the rest of the company being only the "families of all the habberdas'hers, machinukes and innkeipers in the three kingdoms,

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brushed up and collected together." He then compares the present with the past glories of these assemblies. "I have known upon such an occasion as this seventeen Dutchess and Contis to be at the opening of the ball at Bath now not one. This man by his pride and extravigancis has outlived his reasein it would be happy for this city that he was ded, and is now only fit to read Shirlock upon death by which he may seave his soul and gaine more than all profitts he can make by his white hatt suppose it was died red."

It is quite possible that Quin did write this letter. Its peculiar orthography is no proof to the contrary, as a man may have a great deal of genius in one direction and yet not be able to spell (according to the dictionary), especially in those days when as yet Macaulay's phenomenal "school-boy" was not born. When we read, according to Fanny Burney, of a Lord Baltimore saying that he "had been on an *excoriation* to see a ship *lanced*," we may justly suppose that the nice distinctions of the English language were not common property, even among the educated classes. But whether Quin wrote this letter or not, it was evidently a genuine expression of public feeling at the time in Bath, and an instance of the mortifications which now harassed poor old Nash as his attendants to the grave. Little was left of him now but his experiences—and some of these were amusing. He used to call himself "a beau of three generations," and was very humorous in describing the changes he had lived to witness not only in the style of men's wigs, but also in the manner of their love-making. He had seen "flaxen bobs" succeeded by "mejors," and these again by "negligents," which were at last totally routed by "bays" and "ramilees." So with men's love-making. "The lover in the reign of King Charles was solemn, majestic, formal. He visited his mistress in state, languished for a favour, knelt when he toasted his goddess, walked with solemnity, performed the most trifling things with decorum, and even took snuff with a flourish. The beau of the latter part of Queen Anne's reign was disgusted with so much formality; he was pert, smart, and lively; his *billet doux* were written in quite a different style from that of his antiquated predecessor; he was for ever laughing at his own ridiculous infatuations, till at last he persuaded the lady to become as ridiculous as himself! The beau of his later years was still more extraordinary than either. His whole secret in intrigue, consisted in perfect indifference. The only way to make love now," Nash would say, when an old man, "is to take

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no manner of notice of the lady, which method is the surest way to secure her affections."

All men did not follow Nash's advice, to their cost, it seems, as the subjoined letter, taken from the *Chronicle* of February 2nd, 1764, will show. It was the custom in those days to address one's confidences not to the editor, but to the Printer, to whom a young lady thus writes :—

"You must know, Sir, I am what they please to call a Toast and a Fortune, and am consequently tormented with a number of impertinent Humble Servants. But one is the plague of my life, not only from his Assiduity, but his Conduct and Behaviour. He seems to have a design to bully me, or fright me into compliance, for he Courts me, Sword in Hand; and on my first Frown, he draws, and tells me if I am in the least cruel, he will before my eyes stab himself immediately. Now, Mr. Printer, I am terrified at the Apprehension of a Man's killing himself for me; I have a thousand fears about seeing a bloody ghost at my Feet Curtains in the Dead of Night; yet I can't bear the thought of marrying a man, I scorn detest and abominate. . . . What shall I do?—Shall I let him kill himself?—If he is Coward enough to fright me, can you imagine him valiant enough to keep his Word? I should be glad of the advice of some of your Correspondents, for I know not what to do with this threatening *Felo de se* Lover.

"Your Constant Reader."

Being a "Fortune" was generally understood to be an heiress; and in the marriage announcements of the last century the amount of the lady's fortune was always given; if she did not happen to possess one, either her beauty or her virtues were quoted as equivalents, as may be seen from the two following announcements, taken out of many from the *Bath Chronicle.*

"Last Tuesday was married Philip Allen, Esq^re^. (nephew to Ralph Allen, Esq^re^, at Prior Park), to Miss Carteret of Kensington, with a fortune of £10,000."

"Yesterday was married, at the Chapel in the Square, Anthony Keck, jun., Esq^re^, to Miss Legh, daughter of Peter Legh of Lyme, in Cheshire, Esq^re^. A young lady whose Beauty few can equal; whose Virtue none can surpass."

Some of these letters "to the Printer" in the old *Bath Chronicles* of the last century are highly amusing, and give us a picture of the state of society that throws a strong light on the popular sentiments of the day on social topics. Here is one that

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will command some modern sympathy. "Among the pretty girls of the present age it is a general Complaint that they have many Admirers but few Lovers: They dont joke when they say so; it is a Truth not to be trifled with, they feel the Mortification and wonder at it." The writer—a bachelor—who signs himself "Harry Heartfree," then quotes "a venerable virgin," who, lamenting the degeneracy of the age, declares "Courting is nothing now to what it was when I was young! The Flirts now-a-days make the Fellows so saucy, that there is hardly found a respectful Lover." The writer then explains why this is. "The women of the last Age were more respected because they were more reserved. . . . A Woman must *repel* before she can *attract*. . . . Ovid, who knew human Nature . . . discovered not a little penetration when he made Daphne fly so fast from her lover; for his passion was increased by pursuit. Our modern Daphnes are quite other sort of people; instead of flying from, they run into, the Arms of their Apollos and are afterwards surprised that they grow cool. Lovers are like Sportsmen, to whom the Possession of the game is nothing to the pleasures of the chase. . . . " with a great deal of further plain-speaking that is more candid than choice.

To this letter a Miss Harriet Sprightly replies the following week, saying "That all our pretty girls have more admirers than Lovers, is but too true; and who is to Blame . . . The Ladies? . . . but I say the Men: For here as soon as a handsome Girl makes her appearance, they all flock round her, fill up her head with their Praises of her Beauty, and without making an absolute Declaration of Love, give her all the reason in the World to imagine that each esteems her as the most lovely of her sex. Thus when they have by their Deceit and Flattery changed a modest unaffected girl into a vain, bold, conceited coquette, they neglect her for the next new face, and leave her to reflect on their baseness in deceiving and her own Folly in believing. . . . That an affable Reserve . . . is more becoming in our sex . . . is undoubtedly true; but as Gentlemen of late have thought fit to divest themselves of Good manners, the Ladies were under the Necessity of laying by their Reserve, or else they would never be taken the least notice of by those Admirers of themselves the Men. Ovid might know a good deal of human Nature as it was in his time; but it is so greatly altered that I question if Daphne now-a-days was to fly whether our modern Apollos would have any inclination to pursue unless indeed the Lady's Fortune was superior to his. . . . "

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The Printer evidently thought that the Lady had scored, as he appends a footnote, hoping "this lady will continue her Favours."

In another place is a letter from an alarmed spinster calling attention to a paragraph to the effect that the "Tax on old Maids and Bachelors will take place soon after the session." "Now I think it hard our Sex"—she writes naively—"should be included in this tax; for I daresay there is very few single gentlewomen but what would marry if the Batchelors thought proper to make choice. Therefore it will certainly be very severe upon Ladies, to pay for living in a State that is quite contrary to their Inclinations." A clear case this for "assistance"!

Here is a hint for forthcoming electors, which will show them how things were managed in Bath and elsewhere by gentlemen who were forbidden to bribe, yet were anxious to become candidates for Parliament. In the *Bath Chronicle* for September 13th, 1764, we read, "A gentleman of spirit and resolution has generously offered to deposit £3000 to be laid out, for the public benefit of this City at the discretion of the Mayor and Corporation, provided they choose him as one of the Members of Parliament at the next election."

But to return now to Nash for the last time. Goldsmith describes him as having arrived at a condition when he was past the power of either giving or receiving pleasure. He was old, poor, insolent, dirty, and peevish. Yet he loved to haunt with tottering steps the scenes of his former triumphs. He sunk lower and lower in public respect, until finally he became that most pitiable of objects, "an old man striving after pleasure when all power to enjoy has passed away."

The clergy and the pious were shocked at this living satire on humanity, and tortured his declining days with such loud threats of eternal damnation, that they tended to harden rather than turn him to repentance. Here is a specimen. "If you do not remedy in some degree the evils you have sent abroad . . . you will be wretched above all men, to eternity. The blood of souls will be laid to your charge; God's jealousy, like a consuming flame, will smoke against you as you yourself will see. . . . Would you be rescued from the fury and fierce anger of God? You must make haste. . . ." and a great deal more of a like comforting and alluring character, which served only to sting but could not change. No true reformation of life is ever effected through fear, which leaves the heart where it found it, with only

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the exchange of hypocrisy for immorality. Poor old Nash had built up his soul on pleasure and with it; and now it was too late to pull the structure to pieces and rebuild. The ruling passion clung to him to the end. So long as he could stand he loved to dress himself, and would hobble to the Assembly Rooms, where he would appear as a hideous old ghost haunting the scenes of his departed glories.

But worn-out nature overtook him in the end, and he died in 1761, at the ripe age of eighty-seven, after a reign in Bath prolonged to over fifty years. His death awoke—as death so often does—regret and gratitude, when neither could benefit their object. The Bath Corporation rose to the occasion, and gave him such a splendid funeral, that the whole city turned out to assist at or witness the spectacle. The local papers wrote the most eulogistic obituary notices, one even going so far as to liken him to "a constellation of the heavenly sphere!" Doctor Oliver, his old friend, sketched an outline of his life, that reads like an apotheosis, in which he chronicles his virtues while dealing lightly with his faults, pointing out that Nash was ever "the servant of the poor and the distressed: whose cause he pleaded amongst the rich" . . . with such an authoritative address "that few of the worst hearts had courage to refuse what their own inclinations would not have prompted them to bestow." A handsome monument to Nash's memory in the Bath Abbey records in a Latin epitaph his long services to Bath—which, being translated, finishes thus :—

"Ye muses and graces mourn
His death.
Ye powers of love, ye choirs
Of youth and virgins.
But, thou, O Bathonia! more than the rest,
Cease not to weep,
Your King, your teacher, patron, friend,
Never, ah never, to behold
His equal"

The sensibilities of the last age are never more conspicuous than on the monumental tablets in our churches. The measure of their truth and sincerity may be tested by comparing what we have read of Nash in life with what was written on his tomb, which compels us to believe that the pathos of the last century, as thus exhibited, was only another name for bathos.

THE END.

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BEGUN IN JEST.

BY MRS. NEWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "HER WILL AND HER WAY," "WITH COSTS," "THE LAST OF THE HADDONS," &c.

CHAPTER XXIII.

EDWARD LEICESTER.

"MR. LEICESTER wishes to see you, if you please, Miss Leith," said one of the maid-servants, entering the school-room where Mabel was sitting with the children. "He is in the drawing-room."

"He has brought a message from Miss Temple!" thought Mabel in pleased surprise. "She is coming here, or we are to go there, I suppose. Ah, how much good she will do me, without my having to explain anything to her! She knows nothing about Gerard, and can ask no questions to which I should find it difficult to reply. She will help me without knowing it."

Absorbed in this thought, Mabel entered the drawing-room with a flush of pleasure in her cheeks, and held out her hand with a smile. "How do you do, Mr. Leicester? You have brought me a message from Miss Temple, have you not?" she hurriedly began, giving not a moment's thought to him.

"Miss Temple!" he somewhat stiffly repeated, not taking very kindly to the idea of its being supposed he had nothing better to do than to carry about messages for governesses. "No, I have not seen her just lately, Miss Leith;" adding, for reasons she might understand later: "My mother superintends in the school-room. She devotes herself to the children, which renders supervision of mine unnecessary. I find it quite sufficient

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to put them through a weekly examination, with respect to the progress they are making in their studies. For this purpose they come to me for an hour or two in the library; but in the interval I leave everything to my mother and their good governess."

"Oh, indeed!" disappointedly ejaculated Mabel, at once losing all interest in him. "The servant must have made a mistake, I think. She said that you wanted to see me;" adding, as she moved towards the door, "I will let Mrs. Brandreth know you are here, Mr. Leicester."

"No, I beg of you to remain," with a gracious smile, not averse from the idea that it should seem impossible that his visit was intended for her. It added so much to his dignity. "I enquired specially for you, Miss Leith. In point of fact, I have something to say—that is—a communication to make which very much concerns you."

"Concerns me?" she repeated, mentally adding, "He knows Miss Temple is about to leave. Probably he has heard I am going from here, and thinks I might do for his children."

"Will you allow me to give you a chair, Miss Leith?" he said, wheeling one towards her, by way of informing her that he should prefer being seated.

She gave him a little impatient glance from the corners of her eyes, as she sat down in the nearest chair.

He took one opposite to her, endeavouring, meanwhile, to arrange his thoughts so as to render the communication as impressive as possible; but feeling somewhat more at loss for words than Edward Leicester was accustomed to be. The anxiety she had undergone had left traces which were evident even to him, in the way of etherealizing her beauty, and his admiration was very plainly expressed, had she eyes to see.

She waited, her eyes meditatively cast down. Nothing he could possibly have to say would be of any interest to her. But it was no use trying to hurry him; he would take his time in his dull, heavy way.

"I was very much impressed by your goodness to my children the other day, Miss Leith," he presently began, his eyes dwelling complacently upon the beautiful refined face as he went on: "Very much impressed indeed; for I felt sure that a young lady, so kind and willing to sacrifice her own pleasure for——"

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"I sacrificed nothing, Mr. Leicester. Just then I happened to be in the vein for playing with them, and I enjoyed it quite as much as they did," she replied, feeling sure now that her first impression had been a correct one. He was about to ask her to take charge of the children. To bring him to the point, give him his reply, and so get rid of him as quickly as possible, she went on: "It was just the frolic of the moment; I do not care to be always playing with children, Mr. Leicester."

"No, no; I can quite understand that. I am sure you are conscientious in the matter of work."

"I have my moods about work also," carelessly.

"But they are right and proper ones, of that I feel convinced."

"Stupid man! Why won't he come to the point?" thought Mabel. "That only shows how little you know me, Mr. Leicester. You will find there are not many like Miss Temple, and certainly I am not. She is leaving you, is not she?"

"I believe so. But it will not be difficult to find another instructress for my children; governesses are plentiful enough," for the moment forgetting that he was speaking to one. "I leave all such arrangements as those to my mother, Miss Leith. My errand is to discuss a much more important subject."

Discuss important subjects with Mr. Leicester! She was almost on the point of curtly declining, but told herself it would be of no use. She would only have to listen to his stupid whys and wherefores all the longer. "What is it, then?" she a little brusquely enquired.

"I am very deeply impressed"—how hard he had striven to get rid of the impression only himself could know—"by your goodness to my children."

"You said that before!" thought impatient Mabel, as he went on.

"And I may add that the impression deepened and—in point of fact, widened——"

"Deepened and widened!" mentally ejaculated Mabel. "When will he come to the point?"

"Into a—warmer sentiment and—I have now decided to make you the offer of—my hand, Miss Leith"—with all the solemnity and importance which the subject warranted.

If his tone and manner conveyed the impression that he thought he was doing a very generous thing, he was not aware that they did.

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She sat gazing at him with widely opened eyes in unfeigned amazement. She had been so entirely unprepared for this.

"What am I to understand, Mr. Leicester? Is it possible that you wish me to think you are making love speeches to me?" she indignantly exclaimed, rising to her feet.

"It is not only possible, but true," he replied, entirely misunderstanding the cause of her astonishment. "And I shall very soon be able to prove quite to your satisfaction that——"

"After seeing me but once!"

"Twice," he complacently reminded her. "And at church, you know. Besides, I assure you when I have quite made up my mind upon a point——"

"It is too much!"

"Not at all—not at all!"—with an encouraging smile. "I must not allow you to undervalue your own——"

"What have I done to deserve this?" she ejaculated. "It is really quite shameful!"

He fell back for a moment under the scorn flashing from her eyes, but presently imagined that he had not made himself understood, and complacently recommenced:

"My dear Miss Leith, I am asking you to be my wife—Mrs. Leicester."

"Well, sir"—losing her last scrap of patience—"have you the impertinence to suppose that I could possibly care to be Mrs. Leicester?"

He stood for a few seconds gazing at her in mute astonishment unable to credit his senses. But her tone and the scorn in her eyes seemed unmistakable, though he was still slow to believe. He presently contrived to say:

"Do you then wish me to understand that—you decline?"

"Decline! Good gracious, yes; of course I do. And I consider your coming to me, in this way, almost a stranger, and certainly without the least encouragement from me, as little better than an insult. Did you suppose I should be so ready to assent, that you would only have to inform me of your intention?"

He was too completely dumfounded to make any reply. This was a *contretemps* he had not for a moment anticipated. It had cost him a great deal of hesitation and anxious deliberation before he arrived at the decision to make the offer, but the offer once made, he considered that the matter would be settled. To be refused by a girl dependent upon her own exertions for

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her daily bread—and in this way! To be told that it was an impertinence to suppose she could care to be Mrs. Leicester! He could only gaze at her in solemn silence.

She did not wait to hear anything he might have to say. In her indignation she gave him only a very slight inclination of the head, by way of leave-taking, and passed out of the room.

He stood where she left him, immersed in thought. His pride had received a wound which it would take a long time to heal. To be rejected by a chit of a governess—rejected! And this after having, in his ponderous way, made elaborate preparations for the announcement of his engagement. He had that morning informed his mother that he contemplated a second marriage, and that she must prepare herself for a possible disappointment with regard to certain points. It was probable that in the outset she might see cause for some objection, but this she must, for his sake, do her best to overcome. What his bride might lack, he possessed. In fine, he had decided; and when he had decided to do a thing, he did it. After this to be obliged to acknowledge he had failed!

He went out of the room by the window and slowly made his way from the terrace to the avenue. Rejected, and by a governess! Edward Leicester! His mind was slow, and not very fertile in expedients. He was still endeavouring to hit upon some way of explaining matters to his mother, without sacrificing what he termed his self-respect, as he passed under the old elms from which the rooks flew in and out, appearing to caw mockingly at him, when he heard some one addressing him by name. Looking up, he saw Mrs. Brandreth advancing smilingly towards him beneath the trees.

"How do you do, Mr. Leicester? Have you been to the house?" as they shook hands. "I am sorry that I happened to be out. Reginald is not down to-day, too. Will you not return for a rest? Warm still for the season, is it not?"

"Thank you, no. It is very pleasant here. With your permission?"

They both sat down upon one of the seats under the trees, and Mrs. Brandreth proceeded to make the due enquiries respecting Mrs. Leicester and the children.

"I hear you are to lose Miss Temple, Mr. Leicester?"

"Yes; she is about to be married, my mother tells me."

"Mrs. Leicester says she is so very conscientious, and to be depended upon with the children."

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"Yes, I believe so. There have been no difficulties during her residence at the Hall."

"You have been very fortunate; much more so than I."

He looked a little curious. "Indeed! Is not Miss Leith so efficient?"

"She gets on pretty well with the children, so far as their studies go. But she really seems so very inexperienced, and, to say the least, careless about appearances."

"That is a defect, certainly," he replied, not now altogether averse from hearing that Mabel was not quite so perfect as he had imagined her to be.

"Yes, indeed!" beginning to feel that she was listened to with something more than courtesy, and posing very prettily. "To tell the truth, I find myself very awkwardly placed, Mr. Leicester. I am very desirous to be considerate, and make all possible allowance for an attractive girl in Miss Leith's position; but I am obliged to consider my own also, and of this I have been compelled to remind her. It is all the more difficult for me because Reginald will not admit that Miss Leith could be in any way to blame."

He murmured a word or two which sounded like sympathy; and, after a graceful little apology for troubling him with her worries and annoyances, she went on. "But, really, a word of advice would be so welcome, and I have not a friend here to whom I could speak. I was so accustomed to trust to my poor Arthur's judgment," looking up into his face with a pretty air of trust and confidence which struck him as a great contrast with the scorn and defiance he had so lately seen in another face. She pleaded so sweetly for advice, too; the one thing above all others he liked to give.

"I should be very happy to give you any assistance that is in my power to give," he replied, with a low bow; more than a little curious now to hear in what respect Miss Leith had shown so much disregard for appearance.

"One feels so afraid of appearing unkind or ungenerous—but—really! I should not like to mention it to every one," with graceful hesitation; "but one intuitively feels where one may trust, and I am impelled to confide in you."

"You may trust me, Mrs. Brandreth," telling himself that her very hesitation was a point in her favour. She evidently did not like saying anything unfavourable to another, and therefore would be the more conscientious in what she did say.

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"The first little unpleasantness occurred upon my return after a short absence from home, Mr. Leicester. I was informed that while I was away, Miss Leith had spent a great deal of her time in walking about the park with Mr. Harcourt, who had just come to stay with Reginald, leaving her pupils to take care of themselves."

"Very improper," severely; although Mr. Leicester was unconscious of experiencing anything more than a strictly judicial feeling in the matter. Would he not have said the same with regard to any other governess who had acted in a similar way?

"I must say that it appeared so to me, and I felt that it was only my duty to point out the impropriety to Miss Leith. Afterwards, Reginald told me that he himself was most to blame in having brought it about, by asking her to show Mr. Harcourt the lower grounds, or something of that kind. I thought it rather injudicious of him, and frankly said so. But, as he seemed to think there was no harm in what had occurred, and Miss Leith promised that the same thing should not happen again, I was willing to think no more of it, and agreed that she should remain with me."

"Very kind and considerate of you, Mrs. Brandreth."

"I meant to be so, Mr. Leicester; but, really, Miss Leith has acted so very strangely! What will you think when I tell you that, notwithstanding her promise that nothing of the kind should occur again, I only a few days ago came upon her talking in the most confidential way with Mr. Harcourt in the plantations, her hands clasped in his?"

What he did think he did not explain. He could only repeat, "Most improper."

"I thought so, unless there was some secret engagement between them, which, when I questioned her, she said was not the case. She acknowledged that it was quite natural I should be surprised and displeased. She also admitted that I could not, under the circumstances, be expected to wish her to remain here. And yet, you will hardly credit it, Mr. Leicester, Reginald is as ready as ever to find all sorts of excuses for her. What is more, he has now taken it into his head that she is overworked and requires all sorts of indulgences which a governess has no right to expect. I have yielded to his persuasions," with a slight blush at the remembrance of the cheque; "but I feel that by doing so I may be placing myself in a false position. I can only hope that it

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will all be satisfactorily explained, as they tell me it will, although I do not think I ought to have been kept in ignorance."

"Certainly not. I am surprised that Aubyn can have lent himself to anything of the kind."

"It is really very good of you to allow me to open my heart to you in this way, Mr. Leicester. Quite a relief to me, I assure you." In which she was perfectly sincere; it was desirable to secure such allies as the Leicesters in the event of any unpleasantness. Let the promised explanation of the mystery be what it might, it was well that it should be known that she had not been quite fairly treated. "One is so afraid of seeming to have any uncharitable feeling to a young girl in Miss Leith's position, you know."

"None could for a moment suppose you capable of that, Mrs. Brandreth," he replied, looking at her with some admiration. Many people called her fine-looking. She certainly had high-bred features and a refined expression, and her manners—he shuddered at the remembrance of Mabel's brusquerie—were acknowledged to be perfect. As his eyes dwelt complacently upon her, a new idea suddenly flashed across his mind; a way of avoiding the one thing he so much dreaded—that of having to tell his mother that Edward Leicester had been rejected, and by whom!

As he presently proceeded to express his sympathy with Mrs. Brandreth, it was with some *empressement* of manner which she was quick to notice, although she was not quite so quick to perceive the cause. When at length it began to dawn upon her that he was speaking with intention, that the wealthy and influential Mr. Leicester, who had been so long the despair of matrimonial mammas, was, in fact, approaching very close to making her an offer of his hand, she had for the moment some difficulty in concealing her delight and surprise. He soon found the way made easy for him, and the words were spoken which sealed the compact.

With a becoming little flush in her cheeks, and her eyes modestly downcast, she placed her hand in his, murmuring a few words of acceptance, and Edward Leicester found himself the affianced husband of Mrs. Brandreth. He was almost as surprised at the sudden way in which it had all come about as was she herself, although he took it for granted that her sentiments towards him dated much farther back than did his for her, in fact, that his offer had only brought to the surface what had long

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existed in her mind. Had not his mother more than once told him that she thought Mrs. Brandreth would be very glad to become Mrs. Leicester? Yes, he had found the wife best suited to him, he told himself. Could she have been eight or ten years younger it might have been preferable, perhaps, but he was not so sure of this now as he had been earlier in the day.

At the same time no thought of money entered into his calculations. Even the children, although they might be regarded as incumbrances, were to be honourably cared and provided for. The more he thought of the step he had taken, the more was he satisfied, and he very soon managed to forget that it had been done to spare himself the humiliation of being obliged to inform his mother that he had been rejected, and by a governess!

Mrs. Brandreth was already looking the younger and better for her newly-found happiness when they parted, she to return triumphantly to the house, and he to carry the news to his mother. He found her in great anxiety, so much so that she was quite ready to welcome the idea of his engagement to Mrs. Brandreth. It was very different from his marrying some chit of a girl only just out for her beauty, or, worse still, making a descent in the social scale, as his few mysterious words before he set forth had given her reason to fear. Mrs. Brandreth was about his own age, and every way his equal. There was, in fact, no obstacle but the children; and, in her relief, Mrs. Leicester was ready to overlook that. Anything was better than a *mésalliance*, if he must have another wife. She was therefore quite ready to show her approval of her son's choice, offering to drive over to Beechwoods on the morrow. "It will be more gracious if I go to her instead of waiting for her to be brought to me, you know, Edward. A Leicester can take the initiative, and it will tell in her favour with people," said his mother, who, in truth, liked doing gracious things—when they were properly appreciated.

"You are very good, mother, and I am sure——" not certain as to her Christian name, he was obliged to add — "Mrs. Brandreth will rightly estimate such attention." Altogether, Edward Leicester was able to feel that he had done a sensible thing. Had he returned home the accepted lover of Mabel Leith, he would only have been able to feel that he had done a very delightful thing. He could now only hope that she would forget what had passed between them as quickly as possible. Of one

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thing he intuitively felt convinced—his secret was safe with her. Even he understood her sufficiently to recognize that much.

Mrs. Brandreth made her way back to the house in a very delightful frame of mind. No girl in her teens could be more elated with her first love story than was she, as she tripped airily along the drive. To think that this great good had been in store for her, while she was repining at her future prospects, seemingly so depressing! What would the Severns say? How envious poor Miss Hurst would be! It was altogether delightful; she was the most fortunate of women!

But the Severns and Hursts were not on the spot, and it was positively necessary to tell the news to some one. Reginald was in town. To whom—? Suddenly she recollected the governess. Yes, she would tell Miss Leith, she thought, with a pleasant smile of triumph, turning her steps towards the schoolroom.

She found the children gathered round Mabel, and bade them go to Soames and ask her to dress them for a drive with mamma. Dear Edward had been so very kind and considerate when he alluded to the children, and it was only right that the world should see that there was no necessity for keeping them in the background. His love for her was strong enough to render him desirous to act the part of guardian to her children—so she chose to interpret his few words with regard to them.

They displayed very little enthusiasm about the drive with mamma. They had, in fact, no pleasant recollections in connection with such drives, and went off with listless faces and lagging feet to be dressed; Algy murmuring that he couldn't "bear company drives, when you had to sit still and not speak."

"Not very filial, are they, Miss Leith?" said Mrs. Brandreth. "They will be in better training by-and-by, I hope. Children so much need a father's influence, do they not?"

Mabel made some reply to the effect that she supposed children were the better for a father's care; wondering, as she spoke, what made Mrs. Brandreth smile and cast down her eyes in the way she was doing.

"My poor little ones! Yes; it will be so much better for them."

Mabel merely inclined her head, she had hardly caught the sense of the other's words, the absent expression stealing over her face again. But Mrs. Brandreth was not to be deprived of her triumph that way. After a moment or two she went on,

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with a pretty conscious air, "They will very soon have the care they require now."

"A father's care—are you going to be married then, Mrs. Brandreth?" asked straightforward Mabel.

"I have suffered myself to be persuaded, Miss Leith. And it is a great pleasure to me to know that Mr. Leicester is very desirous to act a father's part to my children."

"Mr. Leicester!" repeated Mabel with widely open eyes, involuntarily adding in her astonishment, "Is it possible?"

As it happened, the other was not just then inclined to be critical of the governess's manner, nor had she any doubts as to the effect of the communication she herself had made. "It is only natural and to be expected that a girl in Miss Leith's position, and with a little ambition, should experience some degree of envy at hearing of such a success as mine," thought Mrs. Brandreth.

As, with flushed cheeks and downcast eyes, Mabel was about to try to make some excuse for her involuntary expression of surprise, the other smilingly said, "They will have a beautiful home, will they not?"

"You—are—really going to—marry him, Mrs. Brandreth?"

"As I told you, I have accepted, Miss Leith."

Mabel strove hard to overcome her inclination to laugh. He must have gone direct from her to propose to the other! If she could know the truth! The colour deepened in her cheeks as she glanced at Mrs. Brandreth smiling complacently at her rings, and recollected her own words to him as to the impertinence of supposing she could care to be Mrs. Leicester. Of course it was wrong of her—she ought not to have spoken in that way. But he had appeared so conceited—so very sure that she would be only too eager to avail herself of such an opportunity—and she had got irritated and impatient, and—there it was! He might, however, be sure that what had taken place between them would be kept secret by her, and of course he would not mention anything about it himself—for his own sake.

"Are you going to be married soon, Mrs. Brandreth?"

"I am afraid Mr. Leicester will not agree to a very long delay," replied that lady, as, smiling graciously at nothing, she quitted the room to go and prepare for her drive to "the good Hursts." It was said that Miss Hurst had once indulged hopes of becoming Mrs. Leicester.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

"MY LOVING LUCY."

Mrs. Brandreth's triumph was complete. She was taken into favour by Mrs. Leicester—a success in itself—and congratulations poured in upon her from all sides. If a discordant note was occasionally struck, it was in a not very audible tone. It was, indeed, generally recognized that it would be desirable to be upon visiting terms with the wife of one holding Mr. Leicester's position in the county. If there were any doubts as to the strict correctness of certain statements with respect to her hesitation in accepting the offer, her thought of her dear little ones, and so forth, they were not hinted to her.

If, on her side, she suspected something of what was passing in the minds of some of her friends, she could make allowance for what she called human nature. She did not expect people to be more enthusiastic about another's good fortune than she herself would have been. It was quite enough to have people's congratulations, without enquiring too closely as to what they felt.

One heard the news without any undercurrent of dissatisfaction whatever. To Reginald Aubyn it came not only as a surprise, but a very delightful one—without a single drawback. He had, in fact, of late begun to find his responsibilities with regard to his sister-in-law and her children pressing rather heavily upon him. The rest of the family—his brother, a confirmed invalid travelling about from one watering-place to another in search of health, and her own relations—were content to leave her and her children upon his hands, letting it be seen that they took it for granted he would provide for them. He was willing and anxious enough to do his best, but he found that he could help neither her nor her children in the way he would have liked to do, and he felt that the difficulties of his position would be likely to increase rather than diminish, as the latter grew older. However lacking he might be in some respects, Mr. Leicester would be an honourable and safe guardian for Agatha and her children, and possess an authority which their uncle had not over them—an authority which would be fully exercised.

Under the guidance of Mr. Leicester and his mother—Reginald Aubyn was sufficiently acquainted with them both to know that this would be quite as stringent as was necessary—Agatha would

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make a passable county lady. Moreover, she would not be so much as now under the influence of her doubtful brother. Richard Noel would find no welcome in Mr. Leicester's house, and when he found that he could no longer obtain money from his sister, he might be induced to limit his expenses to his income, or be satisfied to increase this by legitimate means.

Reginald was, therefore, very sincere and hearty in his congratulations, and what was of a great deal more importance to Mrs. Brandreth, he showed that he was inclined to act very liberally, promising to present her with a good dowry in lieu of the yearly allowance he had intended to make her on his marriage. With ten thousand from him, in addition to her own eight hundred a year—which, with Mr. Leicester's ready assent, was eventually to go to her children—she would be fairly dowered, and all responsibility on Reginald Aubyn's side would be at an end. He pleasantly reflected that as Mrs. Leicester, with a town as well as country house, and the occupations of a great lady, she would have very little time to spare for Dorothy, and this relieved him from another difficulty. No two could possibly be more unlike in their tastes and lives than were Agatha and his Dorothy, and he had been of late a little troubled with the thought that he had made a mistake in offering the former the use of the Dower House after his marriage, recognizing that she might be a little too close to Beechwoods. Dorothy was not likely to be influenced in the slightest degree by the taste and opinions of the other, but she might be pained and annoyed, and this would render him combative. So far, he had arranged matters as he pleased, without troubling himself about his sister-in-law's attempts at interference and little manœuvring ways. But with Dorothy it would be different. She would not understand a nature such as Agatha's, and it would be his business to protect her from petty annoyances. All this he was now spared, and he felt as though a heavy burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

Their congratulations were mutual, and with sincerest goodwill on both sides. It was no trouble now to Mrs. Brandreth that he was about to be married; it would make no difference to her. She was, in recognition of his generosity to her, even ready to stretch a point in his future wife's favour, if it should turn out, as she suspected, that he had chosen one who was not socially his equal. She gave him a hint of this, sending all sorts of pretty messages to his *fiancée*, and expressing a hope that they would soon meet. She was longing to welcome her new sister-

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in-law into the family. Indeed, indeed, dear Reginald need make no mysteries with her, she assured him in the kindest way, giving him to understand that she was prepared to do all that was kind. "And, introduced by Mrs. Leicester, her position in the county will be assured, you know."

He nodded and smiled, promising that all mystery should be cleared up very shortly, and she would then find that his Dorothy was not unworthy of Mrs. Leicester's friendship.

Dorothy! Mrs. Brandreth thought the name did not sound very promising; but remembered that old-fashioned names had been in vogue again, and tried to hope for the best, assuring him that she was quite ready to take his word. Whatever dear Reginald said or did always proved to be right!

A smile once more dwelt upon his lips, as his thoughts reverted to the time when he had made some rather severe comments with respect to certain long bills which had found their way to his library table, instead of to her. Well, it was pleasant to know that Agatha bore no malice; and certainly he felt none.

He walked though the park, on his way to the railway station, in a very enjoyable frame of mind, appreciating the beautiful sweeps of verdure, fine old trees, and glimpses of the not distant sea, as he had perhaps not before done, with the thought that his home was soon to be Dorothy's—a home of rest and peace for them both, during the intervals in their London work.

At the lodge, he paused a few moments to say a kindly word to the woman, who came out to courtesy her thanks for some service rendered. "All going on well in the village, Mrs. Green?"

"Excepting widow May, sir. She takes on terrible about her daughter going like that."

"Lucy! Where has she gone then?"

"They say she's gone off with a lover, as she's been seen walking about with."

"A lover? Oh, I understand;" thinking that perhaps Bloggs had persuaded Lucy to be married at once. "Mrs. May need not be anxious; I know the man. He will be as careful of her as her mother herself would be—persuaded Lucy to be married at once, that's all."

"That's what she said in her letter to her mother, sir," replied Mrs. Green, at the same time wondering a little at his tone and manner. It must be true, then; Mr. Harcourt was really going

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to marry Lucy, and Mr. Aubyn did not disapprove of it, or he would never look like that.

With a pat on the cheek of the baby, and a nod and smile to her, he passed through the gate, and along the road to the railway station, his thoughts reverting once more to Dorothy, and his good fortune in being spared any further anxiety and responsibility on account of his sister-in-law and her children. As to Mabel and Gerard, he smiled to himself at the thought of anything preventing those two from eventually finding out that they could not live without each other. Meantime the little probation they seemed to be going through would do neither any harm. Gerard would perhaps learn to be a little more candid as to his real opinions, and she to put up with something less than perfection.

But what had become of Gerard? Aubyn had for the first few days hardly noticed, attaching no significance to the fact, that they did not meet, but he was now beginning to feel a little surprised at it; and, on finding that he had not during that time made his appearance at Kensington, was puzzled as well as surprised. He made his way to Gerard's chambers, only to be informed twice successively that Mr. Harcourt was out. When, losing patience, he questioned a little sharply, Wright became rather confused, murmuring something about his master being just then a great deal occupied with business matters connected with the estate—the new cottages he was building, and—and—the lawyers took up so much of his time.

His mind set at rest, so far—Gerard was at any rate not ill—Aubyn said he should perhaps see Mr. Harcourt at Kensington, if not, he would call again in a day or two, and turned his steps homewards. Mabel had perhaps given Harcourt some little rebuff, and he was beginning to find out what a rebuff from her meant to him, that was all. He looked in upon two or three of his people, and then upon Mrs. Mason, the mission woman.

"I am glad you've come, sir," she ejaculated, looking a great deal relieved at sight of him, "for I've got my hands a'most full with this young woman, and I don't know what to think of what she tells me."

"What young woman, Mrs. Mason?"

"Why, the one Amos Bloggs brought, sir. She's in my room, if you wouldn't mind coming in."

He followed her into the neat little parlour, and looked for a moment or two a little questioningly at the figure of a young

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girl, who had shrunk back as he entered, then exclaimed, "Lucy May! Why, what brings you here, Lucy?"

The young girl stood blushing and paling beneath his gaze for a moment, then, with a burst of tears, replied: "He brought me, Tuesday."

"He? Bloggs?"

"Yes; and he says he will kill me, if I don't stop here till he comes again; but I don't want to see him, I don't!"

"It seems he took her from another lover, sir," put in Mrs. Mason; "and, from what I can make out, it's a good thing he did take her, though she can't see that it is, poor foolish thing!"

"Just explain to me, Lucy," gravely said Aubyn.

"He was going to marry me the very next morning, he said so;" whimpered Lucy, to whom his having "said so" was quite enough.

"He! Whom do you mean?"

"I wasn't to tell his name till we was married; but Amos Bloggs went on that dreadful, I was obliged to. He's Mr. Harcourt, as was staying at Beechwoods, sir."

"Harcourt! Impossible; quite impossible!"

"I don't know why every one should think it impossible a gentleman should marry me!" tearfully ejaculated Lucy.

"I meant because he is Mr. Harcourt, Lucy," said Aubyn, "and he is the same as engaged to a young lady I know."

"He told me about that, sir," hurriedly said Lucy, "and about his friends wishing him to marry her, because she is rich. But he doesn't want to; he wants to marry me, and Amos Bloggs behaved quite dreadful about it; followed us, and came in the same train, and when we got to London abused Mr. Harcourt shameful, and declared he never meant to marry me, and knocked him down before everybody, and put me into a cab, and brought me here."

"You are safe with Mrs. Mason, at any rate, Lucy. But there is some great mistake—there must be. It could not be the Mr. Harcourt I know!"

"He is Mr. Gerard Harcourt, who has been stopping at Beechwoods, sir."

"Impossible!" repeated Aubyn.

"I don't see why people shouldn't believe me. I never told stories." She hesitated a moment, then, taking from her neck a small gold chain upon which hung a locket hidden beneath her

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dress, she offered it for his inspection, saying, with a little attempt at dignity, "This will show. He gave it to me, and there are his initials on it, for any one to see. G. H. to his love L. M."

Aubyn took the locket, and turned away as if for the purpose of examining it in the better light by the window. He was longer about it than seemed necessary, and, when he at length put the locket back into her hand, the grave expression on his face had deepened. As it happened, Lucy was too much absorbed by her own trouble to notice his.

"You know Mr. Harcourt, don't you, sir?"

"I thought I did," was Aubyn's mental ejaculation, as he bent his head.

"And you do not think I would tell you anything that was not true?"

No, he had no reason to suppose she was trying to deceive him; he must try to be just to the poor girl.

"I think you believe that what you say is true, Lucy. But I also think there has been some great mistake." She *must* be mistaken, he said to himself. But, be it what it might, the truth must be brought to light. Suspense would be as unbearable to him as to Lucy. Besides, delay would be unfair to Harcourt. It would be terribly unjust if he were wrongly suspected, and yet this seemed the best to hope for now.

"Have you written to—him, Lucy?"

"I don't know his address, or else I would, sir, and thankful. He must think it such treatment, being attacked like that, and me carried off without being able to say a word to him. Amos Bloggs behaved quite shocking! After beginning by taking Mr. Harcourt aside, and talking to him so quiet and serious, too."

Aubyn reflected a few moments, then came to the conclusion that it might be as well to let her write. It would be the shortest way of proving that she had been mistaken, perhaps, he thought. After another moment's hesitation, he said: "I will give you Mr. Harcourt's address, and you can write to him if you like, Lucy. If you will give her pen and paper, she might write in time for the two o'clock post, Mrs. Mason;" looking at his watch, and then hastily pencilling Harcourt's address upon a card.

"Thank you kindly; yes, sir, I will," readily assented Lucy, to whom anything seemed better than suspense, even the risk of offending her lover by finding out his address, and writing to him there. Mr. Harcourt had been so very particular about

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wishing everything kept secret until they were married. "Had I better say——"

"Say just what is in your mind, Lucy. Write entirely from yourself."

Lucy sat down to begin her letter. After saying a few words to Mrs. Mason, who promised him that the letter should be posted at the time he mentioned, Aubyn took his departure.

Two hours later, he again made his appearance at the house in Jermyn Street where Gerard had chambers, determined this time not to be turned from his purpose.

He was again denied admittance.

"I must see Mr. Harcourt, Wright; and I think he is at home."

Wright murmured something about having his orders, and being bound to obey them, looking almost as determined as Aubyn himself, as he stood blocking the way. Those who served Gerard Harcourt, served him well.

"Look here, Wright! I particularly want to see your master, and I will see him; he is in, is he not?"

Wright could not absolutely deny that he was; but admitted it in his own fashion. "I can't exactly say he is out, sir, but my orders were to admit no one, and it's my duty to obey orders."

"Certainly it is. But it will not be your fault if people get in in spite of you. You see I am not like a stranger;" availing himself of a moment's inattention on Wright's part to slip by him, and pass on to the inner door.

"Well, I've obeyed orders; and if you choose to force your way in I'm not answerable, Mr. Aubyn, that's all."

"I will be answerable."

"Then I'm glad you've done it," said Wright, under his breath. "You are not like any one else would be to him, and there's something terribly wrong with the master, and it's quite time some of his friends knew it. He hasn't been a bit like himself since he last left Beechwoods, and it can't be right for him to start off abroad with but a hurried good-bye, just at the last moment, or perhaps not even that; and only means to send one of the letters he's been writing so many of to-day." But, still obedient to orders, Wright left the other to open the dining-room door, and announce himself.

Gerard was seated at a table strewn with letters and papers, apparently busily engaged in writing. He looked up as Aubyn entered the room, and his face grew, if possible, a shade greyer as he said: "You, Aubyn?"

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"Why do you shut yourself up in this way, Harcourt?" began Aubyn, striving to speak with his accustomed tone and manner. "This is the third time I have been here before getting in; and Wright was so determinedly on guard to-day, that I had almost to fight my way in."

A slight flush rose to Harcourt's temples. "Wright understands my ways, and—in fact, my time has been so completely taken up just lately with law business, and one thing and another, that I have not been able to attend to anything else. I am thinking of getting away for a time."

"Getting away! From England, do you mean?"

"Yes; they tell me there is good sport still to be had, if one goes far enough."

"Going to leave us all?" Not yet could he mention Mabel's name. "Rather a sudden decision, is it not?"

"Not very; once my mind is made up, I am not slow to act."

Both men were very much unlike themselves, and Aubyn was the least self-possessed of the two. After the first momentary surprise, it seemed like annoyance, Gerard regained the appearance at least of self-control; and, taking note of the evident trouble and anxiety in the other's face, he added: "Are you not well, Aubyn? What's come to you, man?"

"I might very well ask the same of you, Harcourt. You are looking in anything but first-rate condition, yourself."

Gerard's eyes fell, and he muttered something about his detestation of law business; then, with a rather grim attempt at a smile, went on; "And I suppose the Griggs are giving you a little more trouble than usual, just now."

"I—to tell the truth, I do not feel quite myself to-day, and I should like to remain here a short time, if you do not mind."

Gerard wheeled a chair towards him, and, as Aubyn sank into it, looking utterly worn out in mind and body, laid his hand upon the bell.

"No; do not ring. I couldn't take anything just now, indeed. Only let me remain quiet awhile."

Gerard looked at him for a moment, then recognized that it might be as well to give him his way, at any rate for the moment.

"All right, old man. Only remember that the bell is at your elbow, and Wright will get you anything you may feel inclined for," he replied, turning towards the table, and taking up his pen again.

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Aubyn sat with downcast eyes and throbbing pulses, silently waiting. Would he presently have to say good-bye to the Gerard Harcourt he had always believed in? Would they never clasp hands in the old hearty way again? Capable of friendship strong and deep, his attachment to Gerard had been of no ordinary kind, and it would cost him not a little pain to say the words that it was possible might have to be spoken. He still tried to persuade himself that all would come right; but he could not altogether ignore facts, and they seemed to tell terribly against Harcourt.

When presently, after a side-glance at the other's face, Gerard lightly gave utterance to a jest, it jarred upon Aubyn as a jest had never before jarred upon him. It was only a few words with reference to the probability of a match coming about between Wright and Soames—a light remark, to the effect that belief in married bliss seemed still to linger amongst the unsophisticated—and a short time previously Aubyn would have scouted the idea of its being in any degree an expression of the other's real sentiments. Now he lost his temper, and made what he felt was a very stupid speech, stiffly replying:

"Be good enough to remember that Dorothy and I belong to the unsophisticated, as you are pleased to call them."

"Oh, yes; I ought to have remembered that, of course, it is no jest to you."

In no mood for bandying jests, Aubyn made no reply; and seeing that he still preferred being left alone, Gerard turned to the table, and occupied himself with his papers again. If Aubyn got a little out of temper occasionally, he soon came round, and would presently be ready enough to make amends.

Aubyn was breathing in short gasps, his eyes turned towards the clock on the mantel-shelf. It was within a minute or so of the time when he had been informed there would be a delivery of letters there. The sound of a bell, and in another minute Wright entered with letters, put them on the table by his master's side, and noiselessly quitted the room.

Aubyn could see that Lucy's letter, with its cramped and crookedly written address, lay with the others, and rose to his feet, keeping one hand on the back of his chair to steady himself, his face grey and drawn, and his eyes turned upon Gerard.

"What ails you, man?" ejaculated Gerard, looking at him in some disquietude. "Why can't you let Wright bring——"

"No, I could take nothing. Read your letters."

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"Oh, they will keep. I get enough of them, just now. Nothing of any importance."

"Please to read them."

Harcourt glanced towards him again, and, supposing that all he wanted was to be free from observation until he had quite recovered his self-control, proceeded to turn over the letters. "Ah! Saunders, again. The usual thing, I suppose—got into fresh difficulty with the builders. Afraid of taking responsibility, and awaiting instructions. A good fellow, Saunders, and quite capable of taking the responsibility about these things, if he would only think so. Had no idea that building a few cottages would involve one in all this. One may have a crotchet, without being an absolute idiot in the way of wasting one's money upon —what's scantling, Aubyn?" The latter made no reply, and Gerard musingly went on: "Scanting I can understand; but scantling—bad scantling——"

Was he going to leave Lucy's letter unread? It almost seemed so. He turned over two or three, where they lay upon the table, with a careless hand. But, after a cursory glance, his eyes presently dwelt upon Lucy's letter; and, with a murmured word, the meaning of which Aubyn did not catch, he opened the envelope, and began to read.

The air seemed stifling. Aubyn turned towards the window, and threw it up, his movements unnoticed now by Gerard, pondering over the letter. Suddenly he gave a short laugh.

"My loving Lucy!"

"A letter from—a love letter?" asked Aubyn, in a choking voice.

"Love?" amusedly. "Well, I suppose it is, of its kind. My loving Lucy! Look here, Aubyn, what do you make out of this? What does it all mean?"

Aubyn drew a deep breath of relief; hope springing to his eyes fixed upon Gerard's face as he advanced a step towards him. "Do you really wish me to read it?"

With another short laugh, Gerard put the letter into his hand. "And tell me what it means, if you can."

Aubyn took the letter, and ran his eye over the contents, gathering enough to see that Lucy had written as she might be expected to write — tenderly, effusively, and ungrammatically. She informed her "dear Gerard" that she was "Oh, so unhappy, because you have not wrote. I have been longing and longing to hear from you. And I am so afraid you have been ill, or

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something dreadful happened. But, dear Gerard, don't be offended because of that man's rudeness in striking you. I could not help it, and I did not want to go with him, only he made me. But he took me to a nice, kind, motherly woman, who is going to take care of me until you marry me. I have not wrote to mother, though I know she will be dreadfully anxious, because I did not like to tell her I wasn't married yet. So write at once, to your loving Lucy."

"What do you make of it, Aubyn? Who is my loving Lucy? Who was the man that struck me; and what was I doing the while? Who is the nice motherly woman, who is so kindly going to look after my loving Lucy, until we are married? A stupid hoax, do you think, or simply a mistake?"

"It seems earnest enough, but a mistake undoubtedly. She appears to think you have been playing the lover, does she not?"

"Or the villain. It looks like it, certainly. Lucy May—? The name seems familiar to me. I feel sure I have heard it somewhere. May? Oh, yes, of course. The young girl Mabel interested herself about at Beechwoods, is she not?"

"Yes, old fellow, I think she is," ejaculated Aubyn, with a beaming face, as he spoke, flinging his arm across the other's shoulder, school-boy fashion.

Gerard smiled; the other was himself again, now. "Yes; this precious epistle was addressed to me by mistake, I suppose —put in the wrong envelope, perhaps. And yet, no; I do not see what it could be intended to take the place of. What could the girl want to be writing about anything to me for? I have not spoken a word to her. I am not sure I have even seen her —unless it was she—to be sure, I begin to understand, now. It was she I saw once or twice with—— The man is worse than I thought him! Yes, I think I can tell you for whom that letter was intended, Aubyn."

"Noel!" exclaimed Aubyn, the truth suddenly bursting upon him. "It does not surprise me."

"My dear Aubyn, I feel quite convinced of it now. I saw him once or twice in the woods, at your place, talking to a pretty looking country girl. The scoundrel has been endeavouring to get her away from her friends."

"Yes; I see it all now! He must have taken your name, to throw her, as well as others, off the scent. She was a new-comer to the place, and did not know him by name. He must

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have laid his plans for the express purpose of throwing the blame upon you. To tell the truth, Lucy May herself showed me a locket he had given her, with your and her initials engraved upon it—'G. H. to his love L. M.' Why, he deserves——"

"Come, that's not orthodox, you know, old man"—with a half smile at Aubyn's doubled fists. "You will be a match for him without that—you and the 'rude man' who has already struck a blow in defence of the 'loving Lucy.' Bloggs, is it not?"

Aubyn nodded.

"Well, I must leave all that to you and him, because I shall not—I have other work in hand just now. Between ourselves, I do not feel very great interest in young girls who require so much rescuing; but one is bound to do it for the sake of——" He bowed his head for a moment, in reverence for another in his thoughts, and presently went on: "But there is no time to lose, and I suppose the first step to be taken must be to disillusion the poor 'loving Lucy.'"

"Thank God!"

"Very right and proper of course, my dear Aubyn; but——"

"I have been anything but right, Harcourt. Indeed, I have been so terribly in the wrong, that I don't know how you will be able to look over it. The truth is, facts seemed to tell so strongly against you—there did not appear to be a thread of hope to cling to——"

"And you imagined I could be capable of that kind of thing—you!" with a grave, set face, and slight movement of withdrawal.

"I beg your pardon, Harcourt; I cannot defend myself. But it has nearly knocked me over. I have gone through enough, if you spare me now. I have, indeed!"

Gerard began in fact to understand what it had cost the other to doubt him; and, after a few moments' hesitation, overcame, and held out his hand. "Think no more of it, old man. It would have been worse for me if you had been right, you know."

They gripped hands, with a quiet, steady look into each other's eyes. Nothing could ever come between these two again. But Gerard presently steered away from sentiment.

"I am glad to have shaken hands before I go, old man."

"When are you going, Harcourt; and for how long?" anxiously.

"Oh, I have already written to you. My letter will explain.

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I don't like leave-taking, and—in truth, I have so little time for going into things just now, if you will excuse me."

"But you must let me say a word—— If you are going away, there is the more necessity for me to say it. My dear Harcourt, we are very anxious about Mabel, and I wanted just to say a few words——"

"Take my advice, and don't say them. The fact is, there is nothing you could say which either she or I would like to be said. We quite understand each other, and even so good a friend as you could do no good as things are. Take my word for it, Aubyn. Look, here is a letter just ready to be sent to her."

Not knowing what the contents of the letter might be, Aubyn felt he could venture no more: only murmuring a few words, to the effect that he hoped they really did understand each other, and that Harcourt would not go away until Mabel's reply had reached him.

There was a rather grim smile on Harcourt's lips, with the thought that no reply was asked nor expected. They shook hands once more; and Aubyn took his departure, his mind so wonderfully relieved upon the one point that he could just then think of little else, and the fact was beginning to force itself upon his notice that he had fasted longer than usual. He quickened his steps homewards. He had given up the vicarage—a large, old house—to the curate and his wife; but two rooms were always kept for his use there, when he was in town.

(*To be concluded.*)

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ROSES.

FROM THE FRENCH OF E. PAILLERON.

I AM too early—she is still asleep.
See, I will seat me softly by her bed,
Where dawn hath scarcely lightened round her head,
My watch to keep.

My kisses shall not fret her deep repose;
Her dream is better than my perfumed gift:
The dawn will watch with me, and pause to lift
Her pinker rose.

O Idler! with the purple-running veins
Tinted like bloom of lilac under snow,
And breath that is as light to come and go
As summer rains;

With lips that closed upon a smile last night,
And flower-like cheeks remembering last night's kiss;
Angels of love may surely look on this
And bless the sight.

Sleep! I am by you, whispering words of love—
Of love and worship in your closèd ear;
I may say all, because you cannot hear
To disapprove.

As Heaven's joy is mirrored in the lake,
Her golden dreams make brightness on her brow—
Am I a part of them, I wonder now,
For love's dear sake?

Sleep, happy child, beneath my happy glance.
I would all dreamèd joys were mine and yours,
And day as sweet as such a night assures—
A waking trance.

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I bring you all the dearest things I have,
What time has spared, nor envy quite bereft—
What having lived of living still is left,
What hope can save.

All that is truest which the world derides,
The gift of loving and the worth of life,
The strength of faith, the holiness of strife—
My tears besides.

I give you all, at once, and in one hour,
Much and so little, strong and yet so weak;
My lady will not let the casket break,
Nor crush the flower.

Let us lie low and hide our happiness,
That sorrow may not hear us on her way,
Or seeing, think, "It is too small to slay
Or to make less."

The miser in the dark immures his gold,
Leaves hide the flowers, birds conceal their nest;
Let sacred love be quiet, as is best,
Not over-bold.

But if our care is vain; if sorrow come
And knock upon our door, you shall not know:
I will go out alone to meet the blow—
If sorrow come!

I will keep all things from you, even doubt;
You shall unconscious tread life's sunny road,
Not guessing it is I that bear the load,
And weep without.

From height to height your untrammelled feet shall cross;
You shall go smiling on towards the goal,
Not knowing you attained the perfect whole
Out of my loss.

But now my soul is rich; if Fate opposes
He must grow weary e'er he rob my store.
Awake, my love! The dawn is at your door,
And I bring roses.

DOROTHEA A. ALEXANDER.

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"TOUT CELA POUR BIBI!"

(BY OUR PARIS CORRESPONDENT.)

THE miserable end of Boulanger, once so popular, whose career might have been so brilliant, cannot be passed over without notice, although the painful details are of a nature on which it is scarcely possible to dwell. There is something so awful in the deliberate suicide of a husband and father on the very grave of the woman who had destroyed the peace of his home, that the folly of the act, with its theatrical surroundings, is lost in the horror of the responsibility incurred; an act only to be excused in the delirium of passion ascribed to a boyish Romeo, and now committed by a man of fifty-four years of age, a husband, a father, even a grandfather! And with what deliberation! Can it be believed that the romantic motive was the real one?

In Paris incredulity prevails, and the common impression is that the man was run to earth, that he had lost all he cared for, that he foresaw even inextricable money difficulties, increased by the death of the woman for whom he had staked and forfeited his position; he knew that his military career was ended, that he had missed an opportunity never to be regained. After the excitement of the past, he could not look forward patiently to a quiet home, with its common-place duties. His friends and adherents, meanwhile, had gradually fallen off; he felt that all his hopes were annihilated, and that a desolate, profitless life was before him. He then determined, with his characteristic love of effect, to end his days in such fashion as to recall his almost forgotten name to all memories.

Such an explanation seems the most rational. Boulanger was not a man of superior intellect; he was only the sharp and polished tool of others, cleverer than he was himself. He was a good officer, and no more; he knew how to command, with a judicious mixture of authority and good-nature, which induced

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willing obedience, but, according to the testimony of his comrades, he had no real military talent, and it was perhaps fortunate for his reputation that his ability was never put to any vital test. He obtained rapid promotion, chiefly because he was favoured by the retirement or decease of those immediately above him, also by a spirit of intrigue and flattery, which worked its way. The real value of his professed gratitude for patronage was, however, fully demonstrated by his conduct to the Duc d'Aumale, to whom he had written even servile letters of thanks, which he afterwards boldly denied, claiming his promotion to be due solely to his own merits. From the time of his boyhood he was said to be untruthful, and later on he never shrank from a falsehood when it could serve his purpose. No principle ever stood in his way when any goal had to be reached. In every detail he was a charlatan, who incessantly had recourse to newspaper puffing, that his name might be kept before the public.

As Minister of War he chiefly sought popularity in the ranks; he was kind to privates, but overbearing with the officers, who generally disliked him, and spoke disparagingly of his supposed military capacity. He certainly improved the position of the soldiers; but the officers, especially those belonging to aristocratic families, were persistently subjected to petty annoyances, on pretence of their antagonistic political opinions. All acknowledged, nevertheless, that when he chose to salve over the wounds inflicted on their pride, his graceful *bonhomie* and seductive manners were irresistible. "C'est un charmeur," was often admitted.

Boulanger knew that the French are strongly impressed by externals; his fine face and figure, his prancing black horse and military demeanour, were consequently turned to account, and soon won the favour of the crowd, who took for granted that the "brav' Général" was all that he seemed to be. His innovations were often cleverly chosen for public effect, such, for instance, as the military salute to the flag, which previously was bent before the commanding officer. Boulanger changed this custom; the flag is now supreme, and the officer in command salutes it with his sword, the effect of which is certainly very impressive.

As Boulanger made incessant changes, and found fault with all preceding regulations, he was supposed to know better than all his predecessors. The hope was consequently awakened that here was a rising hero, who would lead the French to victory and wipe out the stain of defeat. He was called "le Général La

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Revanche," and it was whispered that he would restore Alsace and Lorraine to France:

"Rends-nous, rends-nous, l'Alsace et la Lorraine!"

and the people began to cry "Vive Boulanger!" to the stirring music of patriotic songs. He was essentially vain-glorious, and his not over-strong brain became intoxicated with sudden popularity, while the more acute minds of intriguing politicians saw the use that could be made of such a man. They burrowed in the dark, while Boulanger pranced on his black steed and bowed to the admiring populace. Silly women of fashion courted his presence in their homes, and ladies of the highest rank wore his emblematic carnations in public, even set in jewels.

Then came the fall of the Cabinet and the so-called "exile" of Boulanger in Auvergne, where it was hoped that he would be forgotten. The extraordinary scene at the Lyons railway station was a startling revelation of the position he had gained in the sight of a populace, insidiously worked up by his supporters. But here they "proved too much"; for Boulanger, whose bravery was undeniable on the battle-field, shrank with disgust from such contact with the mob. Ever afterwards he tried to escape from their too affectionate demonstrations, only enduring them when unavoidable, and with evident dislike. No man ever had to encounter a larger dose of inconvenient popularity. Wherever he went, the cry of "Vive Boulanger!" was raised, and became a roar; so that when a crowd was seen at a distance and noise was heard, it was easy to foresee what would be the answer to enquiry: "C'est Boulanger qui passe!" often with the accompaniment of a contemptuous shrug and the comment: "Sont-ils bêtes?" Some such flattering remark was made by a good lady who kept a shoemaker's shop, and who expressed her very sensible view of the matter to Boulanger himself, driven to take refuge within her walls. Never dreaming that she was sheltering the great man in person, she opened a back door leading to another street, condoling with him meanwhile on his unfortunate and inconvenient likeness to Boulanger, which had caused such a troublesome mistake!

When safely shielded from personal contact with his admirers, as on the night of his election as Deputy, when he watched the crowd on the Boulevards from the windows of the Café Durand, he was amused and delighted with the popular enthusiasm, exclaiming in childish glee: "Tout cela pour *Bibi!*"—applying

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the pet name to himself in no very dignified manner. The trifling circumstance reveals the whole character of the man. We can scarcely imagine the Great Napoleon alluding to himself as "Bibi." On one of the many occasions when Napoleon the Third was surrounded by a seemingly delirious crowd surging round his carriage and shouting "Vive l'Empereur!" as vehemently as they afterwards cried "Vive Boulanger!" the Count de Tascher la Pagerie, who attended the Emperor, was surprised at the grave indifference with which he raised his hat in response.

"Mais, Sire, vous ne semblez éprouver aucune satisfaction?"

"C'est que je connais les hommes, Tascher," was the almost mournful reply.

Boulanger did not know mankind.

On that night, if he had possessed the ready decision and strong determination which characterizes really great men, he would have been the master of France, for the reins were ready to be grasped by a firm hand, guided by a stronger brain than was, alas! that of poor "Bibi!" A triumphant entry into the Elysée seemed so obviously the thing to be done, that no less a personage than Constans himself went there, fully expecting to witness the event. When he found that Boulanger did not come, he turned away with a sort of contemptuous satisfaction, saying, in more energetic than elegant French, the equivalent of, "It is all up with him!" And meanwhile "Bibi" laughed with his friends, making great plans for the future.

When that future came, and he had again the game in his hands—when his supporters had prepared everything for an insurrection and a *coup d'Etat*, when the Government strained every nerve to meet the coming struggle, with its doubtful results—suddenly, like a thunderbolt, came the wonderful news that Boulanger had fled—and not alone.

No one at first could believe the report—indignantly denied by his friends. But where was he? Why did he not come forward? At last the humiliating truth could no longer be concealed; the sham Samson had followed Delilah. From that day, like his prototype, his power was gone. The military commander, the politician, had disappeared. The man now sought only the luxuries of life, as if he had inexhaustible wealth at his command; and yet it was well known that he had no private means. The Parisian *gamins*, with their well-known slang, archly enquired, in satirical songs—

"Dis-donc, Ernest, où c'qu'est ton Pactole?"

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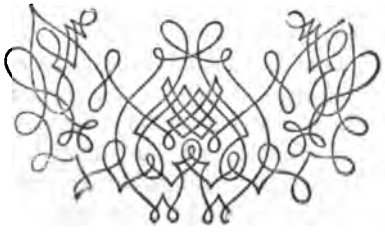
The answer to these troublesome questions was plain enough when the disgraceful intrigues with the Orleanists were revealed, and the thousands lavished by the Duchesse d'Uzès were enumerated. There was a general outcry, but the conspirator seemed now to have only one idea and one aim left. "Marguerite, vivante ou morte, je ne vous abandonnerai jamais"—and such constancy, in one so proverbially inconstant, was the strangest feature in the case.

Then came his downfall. The visits of his friends were less and less frequent—silence and solitude, instead of admiring crowds, and a dying woman as his only companion.

"Dieu l'a jugé—silence!"

* * * * *

NOTE.—In 'MURRAY'S MAGAZINE' for August, a remark occurred in the article entitled "Great Steamship Lines, No. VI." which does injustice to the S.S. *Austral*, belonging to the Orient Steam Navigation Company, Limited. The Directors of the Company point out "That the *Austral* in November, 1882, was being coaled in Sydney Harbour on a fine night. The coal was put into the steamer through her coal-ports, and, owing to gross negligence on the part of those in charge, the ship was allowed to list, and consequently sank. She did not, as stated in the article, 'turn turtle,' nor had the question of her beam anything to do with it."



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CORRESPONDENCE.—THE SITE OF CALVARY.

To the Editor of 'Murray's Magazine.'

Sir,

Many good people, and these by no means fanatics, are doubtless feeling perplexed and sad at the persistent assaults directed against the traditional Holy Places, and in particular against Calvary. What are the facts concerning the latter?

About a generation ago an American traveller, strolling around Jerusalem, thought he observed, in a cave-faced hillock that lies just outside the Damascus gate, a resemblance to a skull. Lightly setting the centuries aside—the thousand years of use and wont before America's day—he hailed the sudden inspiration, and pronounced the spot the genuine Calvary. The snowball thus casually started has been so diligently rolled that, for some time past, the traditional locality has been getting generally discredited in the eyes of ordinary travellers—so much so that many leave the Holy City without deigning even to enter the Church of the Sepulchre. And now the theory is being set forth so confidently among ourselves, that some religious papers are fain to accept it, in a spirit of reluctant resignation, as final. It remains, however, to be said that there are those who have wandered among the Holy Places as industriously as any of the innovators, with no less enthusiasm and probably no less intelligence, and who still contend that not one of the arguments advanced in favour of the American theory but might with equal force be made to do duty in behalf of the traditional view.

We would seem to be growing reckless in our suggestions. Take, for instance, the latest of a distinguished Professor. In the first volume of a really valuable work—of which he is editor—he starts the grotesque if not gruesome theory that Mary's Well and the Pool of Siloam, both of them on the east, are none other than the two Pools of Gihon—always hitherto believed to be, where any one with eyes may see them to-day, on the west side of Jerusalem. Going thus far, he feels compelled, in order to be consistent, to assume further that the Tyropean Valley is the real Hinnom, and that Ophel is Zion! His colleagues assuredly would smile if asked to endorse these daring assumptions. And so a measure of comfort may be gathered, after all, from the situation: such wild guessing would never be resorted to were it not that those who do it are persuaded in their inmost hearts that positive certainty on these points is not to be hoped for. In the circumstances tradition has a perfect right to say, "The old is better."

J. Kean.

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MURRAY'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1891.

ESTHER VANHOMRIGH.

BY MARGARET L. WOODS,

AUTHOR OF "A VILLAGE TRAGEDY."

CHAPTER VII.

ESSIE was very silent on the journey, as her light chaise—the horse was young and her coachman knew she loved fast going—flew across the Phœnix Park, and swung down the steep hill where the old road to Lucan dips to the banks of the river. It was dark except for the light of the chaise-lamps. Francis was leaning back in the opposite corner. Having addressed her once or twice and received no answer, at length, when they were far upon their road, he roused her by some remarks in the course of which he compared her unfavourably as a companion with a red Indian in a frost. Essie asked pardon humbly for her inattention. She might have alleged a headache, but small fibs did not come naturally to her, and in truth she was physically quite unaffected by her part in an interview that had shattered Mrs. Johnson. So she merely said that something had occurred in Dublin which preoccupied her mind. Perhaps the darkness gave Francis courage.

"Essie," he said shortly; "Moll had confidence in me. 'Tis a pity you have none."

"Now, Frank, how can you say that, when I show so much?'

"Yes, a very great deal. You tell me your money matters because you don't value 'em any more, and believe that I can save you trouble. That's your shrewdness, and shows no confidence except in mine."

"Well, I see you are still the old brat, never contented."

"Pardon me, I was never discontented without a cause. Do I complain of living in the American wilderness, as you folks at

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home call it? No, I like it, and so would you if you was there. 'Tis reasonable to complain when a man has a grievance that can be remedied, as mine can easily be. Sure I don't flatter myself in thinking there's no other relation you have, male or female, you value as much as myself. How vastly well that sounds for me, to one that does not know!"

Essie could not help smiling.

"I am willing to allow as much," she replied.

"'Tis not a great deal," returned Francis drily, "when you can't abide the others. But Moll thought more of me than that, Hess; she asked me to stand to you in her place when she was gone."

"Nay, that's impossible, Frank!" cried Essie.

"You think I don't love you as much," he said.

"How should you, dear cousin?" she answered gently. "Yet you love me much better than I deserve."

"They were silent a few minutes. Then—

"Essie," he said, "do you know that Moll sent for me to come home and take care of you."

"No," she cried, with a start; "indeed I did not. I am very sorry for 't—I mean sorry you should have left your affairs and taken so long a journey on my account, when you can be of little service to me, except in so far as I am honestly glad and comforted to have you."

"I might perhaps be of service to you," he returned. "But you will not let me. You will not consider that we have known each other as well as brother and sister all the days of our lives, and that there's none who has so good reason to love and serve you as I. 'T was not on account of your land or your fortune—matters with which she knew you well able to deal—that Molly begged me to stay with you."

"I know not what you would have," she murmured.

"I would not be forced to watch you sending good years after bad ones, and never a word said. For Heaven's sake let there be no disguises between us, but tell me plainly whether you intend staying here and continuing the same mode of life. You know what I mean. But 'tis madness, and I'll not leave you to it—I'll hang first. Oh, I have a thousand things to say to you, Hess, and can't say 'em and yet I will."

"Not now, Francis," she cried faintly, "wait a little. I know not what I intend. I promise you shall hear my resolve, and even the reasons for 't when 'tis made. But say no more on 't now. I can bear nothing more this evening."

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"I am content with your word of honour that you'll put confidence in me. Indeed, there's none has so great a regard for you, Essie, if you'd but believe it."

And so they passed to indifferent topics.

Essie went to rest that night with a conscience, if not a heart, unburdened. She could not but believe Mrs. Johnson's solemn assertion that she was not married to Swift, but she did not feel very sure that she had got to the bottom of the matter. And now that the impulse which had taken her into Mrs. Johnson's presence was exhausted, she began to fear that Swift would be told of her proceedings, and be extremely angry with her. She lay awake half the night, thinking of what she could say to assuage his wrath. She decided to write to Mrs. Johnson and beg her to keep silence; but when the morning came she could not stoop to that. It was a warm, grey day, with a noise of distant thunder rolling about the Wexford mountains, and an occasional swift, heavy shower racing across the garden. She wandered out between these brief storms, pretending to garden, and then about the house, pretending to look to household trifles, but all the time a heavy weight seemed to be on her head, and a yet heavier one, a weight of terror, on her heart. About noon, Francis came in to transact business, and they laid out ledgers and papers on the book-room table; but he complained that she was so inattentive she might as well not have been there. Before they had been long at work, she suddenly jumped up, and thrusting some papers into his hands, said to him with a startled face:—

"Take these into the next room. Pray go at once."

She had heard the sound of hasty hoofs approaching the house along the hard high-road. A moment after there came a loud knock at the front gate. Francis went reluctantly, and left the door of the dining-parlour ajar. He could not but guess whose was the heavy foot that immediately afterwards came striding into the house. Swift had flung his reins to the old manservant who opened the outer gate to him, and entering the house unannounced, burst into the book-room.

Essie faced him half leaning on the table, as white as a sheet and with terror legible on every line of her face. Two days ago she had wondered in jest what the hundredth Cadenus, the one she had not seen, was like; now she saw him. The awful look she had seen and dreaded before was mild compared to this, for it was not only a vision of black wrath that stood there frowning

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upon her, but something worse; something that cut into her heart, cold and sharp as a knife. It was, or seemed to be, Hate. An interminable minute the shape stood in the doorway, then making two strides forward, flung a sealed packet violently down on to the table. At the same instant Esther sunk on her knees, as much because her trembling limbs refused to support her as for the purpose of supplication, and stretching out her hand, clutched him convulsively by the right arm as he turned to go.

"Cadenus!" she would have shrieked; but nothing more was audible than a hoarse murmur that died in her throat.

"Cadenus!"

At the second attempt her lips framed the word; but the voice was a mere whisper.

He raised his left hand as though to loose her fingers from his sleeve, and loosening them herself, she let her arm drop to her side. In an instant he was gone. She heard the bang of the house-door and the outer gate, and then the hurrying hoofs of the big horse, just as she had heard them four minutes ago, only this time they were going instead of coming. When the last echo of the horse-hoofs had died away, Francis, listening in equal bewilderment both to the sounds and the silence of those few minutes, heard a strange cry; a long, low, moaning cry, less human than like that of some inarticulate suffering creature. Yet it seemed to proceed from the book-room. He went in, and coming hastily round the corner of the open door, almost trod on Essie's hand. She had fallen face forwards on the ground, and the hand stretched out above her head held a torn wrapper, which seemed to have contained the sheaf of papers, that had slipped after her from the table, and lay strewn upon her body. Francis called her name, but there was no response, and on raising her head he saw she was perfectly unconscious.

Swift had once been used to scoff good-naturedly at Esther if she told him that she was sick; but hers was that strange kind of good health which has a poor constitution behind it, and the sufferings and anxieties of the last few years had told upon it. For some days after her last interview, if so it could be called, with Swift, she kept her room and saw no one. When she reappeared both Mrs. Conolly and Francis were startled at the change in her. To herself it appeared not so much that she was another person, as that she was dead; a corpse that moved and spoke and even remembered, but to which some essential

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of life was lacking. It no more occurred to her that she could take up again that past existence of hers than it could have done if the grave lay between her and it. For years she had believed, at first rightly, afterwards mistakenly, that Swift loved her better than he dared allow. Time, circumstance, and last but not least, the violence of her own passion, had completely worn out his sentiment for her. Now for her too the moment of awakening had come. She saw that her love was unreturned; yet more, she believed that she had always been indifferent to her idol, and had even become an object of hatred to him. Her twelve-years' passion, the torture and the inspiration of her life, fell dead, and with it died the greater part of herself.

For many days and nights following that first and last meeting of the two Esthers, the thoughts of each ran in much the same channel. Esther Johnson, for all her philosophy, was unable to refrain from bestowing a good deal of useless and painful reflection on the disappointments and disadvantages of her connection with Swift, while the disaster and humiliation that had attended hers seemed to Esther Vanhomrigh, as she lay staring at the darkness night after night, to be branded on her flesh. Yet each one, entertaining the last of the common stock of lovers' delusions, said to herself that after all Swift was the only man she could ever have loved.

If in the night Essie tossed on her bed, or paced the room in a restless agony of thought, in the daytime a great apathy of body and mind had fallen upon her. Her constitutional indolence, no longer counteracted by strong interests, seemed all that was left of the old Esther. The autumn was cold and rainy, and she spent most of the day on the stool before the fire that had been her favourite seat, but the habitual book was no longer open before her, or if open, was unread. She never left the grounds, even to visit the few poor families whom she had found fit objects for her charity among an innumerable crowd of claimants. For, generally speaking, the dirt and untruthfulness and disorderliness of the Irish poor offended her more than their wit and shrewdness and *naïveté* amused her. Sometimes she would leave the fire and go out through the parlour window without any protection against damp and cold, as had always been her custom, and stroll aimlessly round the garden, or stand on the old bridge and watch the swollen Liffey tearing under the high arches, tumbling amid its yellow foam dead leaves and mats of dry reeds and broken branches. She would

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go to the bower, too, and stand with a strange apathy in the very place, leaning on the very branch, where she had stood on that September day when she and Swift had last visited it together. The bower above and around and the island below, turned golden, and sheltering each other, kept their glory later than the meadow trees, which the stormy winds and rains stripped bare earlier than usual. But in time, they too laid it by, and the slender yellow leaves of the willows, and the small fretted orange or red leaves of the thorns, were mingled in the stream and rushed on under the bridge, or were heaped by the eddying river in its miniature bays and inlets. The russet foliage of the oak remained longer to roof in the bower; but the wind and rain moaned and pattered through it onto the rock below. Still if it did not actually rain, Essie continued to come thither in her black dress and thin kerchief, though week by week the full curves of her shape fell away and grew nearer to hollow leanness, and the pink of her cheeks was replaced by two spots of hard, bright colour.

Meantime Francis, lost now to all thought of what might be said about it, hovered round her, putting shawls for her that she did not use and food on her plate that she would not eat, and inviting her to walks and rides she would not take, though she never failed to thank him for his care and remonstrate with him for losing his time with her. But something more was needed than this kind of care. If anything could have warmed the icy corpse of Esther back to life, it would have been a warm stream of human tenderness, flowing out perpetually towards her in expressions of love, in soft beguiling ways and instinctive adaptation to her moods. Her melancholy condition and loneliness, except for himself, made Francis more sensible than ever of his deep attachment to her, and he knew vaguely what she wanted, but he could not give it her. All his life up till now he had been accustomed, first as a matter of temperament, then as a matter of pride, to hide all that was warm and kind in him under a cold and unkind mask, and now in bitter helplessness he strove to alter himself and could not. A caressing word upon his lips sounded idiotic in his own ears and unnatural in hers. If love had burst into his life as something new, it might have altered all that; but his love for Esther was part of his old self, and to her less than to anyone else, could he be different.

To be passive and helpless in the face of a crisis was a new experience to him. But he dared not take any decided step,

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lest it should be a wrong one, and had Essie been capable of noticing anything, she must have noticed a transformation in him, for he grew silent and almost humble. He never asked her about that strange apparition of Swift, for he had observed enough to be satisfied that it had signified a rupture between them. The papers which he had picked up from the floor and locked into her desk on the day when he had found her lying unconscious, were evidently letters of her own, and the thick fair curl that had fallen down among them had no doubt been cut years ago from her young head, with a *badinage* that had not wholly masked some underlying sentiment. The Dean had quitted the field; so far so good—but what a wreck had he left behind him!

After this state of things had lasted without any change for nearly four months, Francis at length behaved in a manner that he despised; he went and confided his wishes and difficulties, and Esther's melancholy condition to Mrs. Conolly. Mrs. Conolly had long had uneasy suspicions concerning Miss Vanhomrigh and the Dean, whom she was as willing as Francis could desire to credit with the whole blame of the matter. This was the secret of her anxiety to see Miss Vanhomrigh well married, for otherwise she was not one of that class of matrons who regard all the disengaged men and women of their acquaintance as so much marrying material. When Francis had told her his story in an embarrassed and unexpansive manner, yet with a sincerity of pain and anxiety which he could not disguise, and when she had amplified it by her own guesses and observations, she solemnly declared that her fancy could not have devised anything so good as this marriage, which, besides presenting Miss Vanhomrigh with a good husband, would remove her far from the possibility of renewed intercourse with Swift, and from all that could recall to her the faults and the misfortunes of her youth.

"Describe to her your solitude, Mr. Mordaunt," she said when Francis had declared for the tenth time that Essie had a regard for him, but that he despaired of persuading her to look upon him as a possible husband. "Describe to her the horrors and dangers of the American wilderness!"

"Danger! Nonsense!" interjected Francis.

"The absence of all that can make life agreeable," continued Mrs. Conolly; "and see if she'll not be eager to share all with you."

"What, madam? You would have me appeal to her pity?'

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"Yes, Mr. Mordaunt, for her sake. I am certain she'd make you a good wife, for she's one of whom you may say that when she sets her hand to the plough she looks not back. Yet 'tis more for her sake than for the difference 't will make to you in that savage—yes, I will call it savage—country, that I earnestly hope for this marriage. If you love her, lay pride on one side, and through her love if you can, but through her pity if you cannot, win her—for her own sake win her."

Francis put up his lip, and could not promise to do anything of the sort.

She went to see Miss Vanhomrigh with him a few days after, and found her on the terrace outside the summer parlour.

"What will you do when your cousin is gone?" she asked Essie, when Francis had stepped down into the garden for a minute. "Sure you'll not let him cross the seas alone and leave you here alone too. 'Twould be the foolishest thing."

"Would it not be foolisher, dear madam, to keep him here idle, and even in danger should he be recognised?"

"'T would be madness. But there's no such reason why you should not accompany him."

"Why, Madam Conolly, you forget we are not in fact very nearly related. The good people in the plantations would talk."

"I meant of course that you should marry him."

"Poor Francis! Would not that be a little unfair to him?"

"My dear, he wishes it," whispered Mrs. Conolly, pressing her hand as Francis rejoined them. And in a few minutes she took her leave.

"What were you saying to my cousin just now, madam?" asked Francis, as he handed her down the terrace steps.

"I was saying that you wished to marry her," replied Mrs. Conolly indifferently. Francis ejaculated something that did not seem expressive of gratitude.

"Lord! No thanks, I beg," said Mrs. Conolly, with a little smile. "Sure, 't was not for your sake I did it, but for hers. I was convinced you'd never do it yourself."

"You take me for a timid man, Madam Conolly."

"By no means, but for a lover so half-hearted and cold that, were 't not for the happy circumstance of your dwelling in America, I'd by no means desire a woman I valued to marry you."

She spoke partly in jest, but also partly in earnest. Francis reddened, but when he returned to Esther he was unusually pale. It was a mild December day, and she sat listlessly on the

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balustrade of the terrace, looking away over the river and the meadows to the blue Dublin mountains. Francis stood in front of her.

"Did you believe what Madam Conolly told you, Hess?" he asked.

She turned her eyes on him with a puzzled look.

"What was it?" she said. Mrs. Conolly's whispered information had made no impression upon her, and she was not thinking about it. Indeed she could hardly be said to think of anything in those long days of brooding, and even at night her thoughts and feelings had ceased to be very clear and poignant, though fever and a hacking cough kept her awake.

"She told you I wished to marry you, and it is true. If she said that I loved you dearly, that was true also."

She still looked at him with that little puzzled contraction of the brows that was familiar to him.

"Mrs. Conolly cannot let me be," she said; "but indeed you need not listen to her, Francis. You have always made too much of the trifle of kindness you owe us. I do not wish to marry, and if I did, for you to marry me out of gratitude—why, 't would be ridiculous."

"Good heavens, Hess!" he cried, coming nearer to her, "can't you believe that I love you?"

She sighed wearily, as one who is obliged to talk of what does not interest her.

"I know you do in reason, Frank," she answered. "But you don't want to marry me. Mrs. Conolly has been talking to you. Why can't she leave me alone?"

"Now listen to me, Essie," he said, standing up close to her and taking her hand. "Confound Mrs. Conolly; don't mention her again. Ten years ago I said to myself that I would get you for my wife, if ever I had a chance. Have I got a chance now, Hess? Do try and believe I love you."

"No, no; you can't," she whispered, turning pale.

"Hess, I can—I do."

She wrenched her hand from his grasp, for a moment roused from her apathy.

"You wouldn't if you knew," she moaned. "Not if you knew how I have spent myself in worshipping that man—oh, much worse!—how I grovelled at his feet, and he all the time hating me."

Francis stepped back and silenced her by a quick gesture.

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"Hush," he said almost sternly, "never tell me a word of him! 'Tis folly, for you can say somewhat to give me pain, but nothing to alter my regard for you. For God's sake let all this be clean forgotten between us. There's a new country waiting for you, Essie. You'll love it very well. There's little company there, but you never was fond of company, and there's plenty of work to be done, such as you was used to love. And I must tell you myself, since there's no one else to do it, that you will find yourself and me persons of consequence out there, and all the people coming to us for counsel and assistance from as many square miles of country as there are in Ulster and Leinster put together. You used to say you'd love to be somebody, Hess, and on my honour you may be a queen out there. Then 'tis such a wholesome air—not like this chill place; you'll soon lose your cough and be as strong as ever you was. 'Tis certain you'd do well to come with me, Hess—I can't take a 'No.'"

Her momentary agitation had passed away; she listened quietly with bowed head. She remained silent so for a minute or two after he had finished speaking, and he fancied his words had not been without effect. Then she looked up at him with a strange look, half dull, half sad, and shook her head slowly.

"'Tis too late," she said. "You are very good, Frank; once I should have liked your new country well enough." He cried out against her "too late," but she continued talking in a spiritless way, yet as one stating some plain fact. "Yes, it is too late, and I will tell you why. I dare be sworn you think there's no such thing as a broken heart; I was used myself to think it a bit of cant or ladies' vapours. I know better now, for my own heart is broken. It should not be so, I allow; I must be a poor weak creature for this to have happened. I see very well that what you say is wise as well as kind, and I should be very fortunate if I could do as you advise; but, my dear, 'tis of no manner of use. I am fit for nothing more in this world though I should be thirty or forty years in it, as I very well may be."

There was something dreadful in the dead calm of her speech and look; it almost carried conviction to Francis's unwilling mind, but he withstood the impression. Sitting down by her on the balustrade, he endeavoured to argue with her, but in vain. She only shook her head at his reasoning. At length he was reduced to silence and despair, when suddenly Mrs. Conolly's

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advice occurred to him. Must he appeal to her pity? Yes; for her own sake. So he made the last sacrifice of his pride, and pleaded with her to come for his sake, because if she did not his life would always be solitary—more solitary than she could imagine.

She smiled faintly.

"Not always, Frank. You are young for a man, and look at me—I am an old, old woman. Some day you will get a young wife, and live happy ever after."

He answered impatiently—

"Women seldom come my way, and when they do they don't love me nor I them. Besides you know me, and with how cold a heart I am cursed, so that I never loved but very few persons in my life. There are just two alive now I love, and one is his lordship, and t'other—well, that other I love incomparably more, and always shall do, so long as I live."

"I am sorry for you, Frank," she said, "and yet I am not. For I can't, however I try, be truly sorry about anything. I used to laugh at you when you was a boy, for thinking whenever you was sick that you was going to die, and now I am as foolish myself, for it seems to me that I am going to die."

He threw his arm round her, not caressingly, but to drag her into the house.

"Good Heaven," he cried; "you must leave this cursed climate, or 't will kill you as it killed Molly!"

"Ah," she said. "So you too think it killed Molly. I have sometimes thought so since she died. In that case 'twas my fault that she died, for 'twas my doing that we settled in Ireland; she never loved it very well."

They had by this time reached the glass doors into the parlour.

"Essie," he said solemnly, "if you continue to give way to such splenetic fancies, you will end a mad woman."

"I was a mad woman, Frank, for the best part of my life. 'T would have been a mercy then to have sent me to Bedlam. But now I am quite sane, and know very well what I have been and what I am. Oh, Frank, you must be mad yourself if you really love me. Let us not talk of it any more."

But Francis, having once begun his wooing of Esther, carried it on with the energy and persistence that marked him in all his undertakings. In earlier days such obstinacy would have roused a rebellious temper in Esther, but 'Governor Huff' was now dead and buried. She shed a few weary tears over the

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matter, and finally got her own way by partial yielding. He was to go away and leave her to think it over. In the spring, on his way back to America, he was to return to Cellbridge, and then perhaps—very likely, she would do as he wished.

So foolish a thing is the human heart that it was with a feeling of relief Esther watched the ship sail out of Dublin Bay, which bore away the only creature that loved her, except two old servants. She was glad to get back home and brood wholly undisturbed, even Mrs. Conolly having gone to Dublin. Soon after Christmas there came a heavy fall of snow and an iron frost that seemed as if it would never go. For weeks the roads were blocked and every village thrown upon its own resources. Neither news nor visitors came near the lonely house at Cellbridge. The black trees broke under the frozen snow, and their great branches lay across the garden paths or hung into the river and caught as in a net the pieces of ice it brought down in its chill dark current. And sometimes Esther wandered out to the bridge, and watched the icy river or scattered food for the freezing birds, but oftener she sat idle by the fire. All the winter there was no change in her, except that every day she grew leaner, and coughed more, and suffered more pain.

Chapter VIII.

When Swift had recovered the "bad head" that had followed on his angry rupture with Esther Vanhomrigh, he expected to find a letter from her full of appeal and remonstrance, or at least reproach. He had fully made up his mind to return it unread, yet he was glad not to find it. Weeks went by, and still she made no sign. At length then his life was free from those continual claims which he could neither deny nor allow. He had hardly guessed how completely Esther's sympathy and admiration had ceased to compensate him for the worry and division of interest his connection with her caused him. He who prided himself justly on the faithfulness of his attachments, was a little ashamed to think how this great friendship of his, that had once been but too warm, was now quite cold; a dead burden to be thrown out of his life with a sigh of relief. But the fact must be acknowledged, with shame or without it; he was thankful to have shaken himself free from this ten-years' entanglement. He walked the streets with a lighter step, and gave more sugar-plums

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and halfpence to the children, and rallied the apple-women more good-naturedly than he had ever been known to do; and every one said how hearty the Dean was looking. Mrs. Johnson, too, was brilliant in spite of the bad winter. Since she would not let him speak to her on the subject, he had written her a letter asking her pardon a thousand times for the pain he had caused her, telling her that he was fully resolved never again to hold any communication with that poor crazed creature "that shall be nameless," and imploring her to exercise all her powers of forgetfulness on the matter. Hetty did not, never again could love him as she had once done, but she was neither analytical nor repining, and found another kind of happiness in his complete devotion to her; a devotion as tender as he had shown in the days of her youth, and much more respectful and unselfish. She was formed for society, and life became very pleasant to her as the increasing number of Swift's admirers and friends widened the circle of her own. He was no longer a lonely man in Dublin, except with the inevitable loneliness of his intellect and character. If it was beyond Mrs. Johnson's power to understand or genuinely care for many of his interests, there were others about him now to supply her deficiencies; young eager minds looking to him for inspiration. He threw off that winter in mere light-heartedness a dozen anonymous ballads, epigrams and broadsheets on trifling occasions, which have mostly disappeared with the trunks of a long-past generation of travellers. They served to keep his pen sharp for more serious warfare, as it was reported that the English Parliament intended before long to make a fresh attack on the liberties of Ireland, through the coinage. All patriotic eyes turned towards the great Dean, and he like the war-horse of his favourite Book of Job, scented the battle from afar and cried "Ha, ha!" at the sound of the trumpet. For full six months he rejoiced in his freedom, and never so much as thought of Esther Vanhomrigh. At length the persistent black east winds had ceased to blow, and as he rode into the country, he noticed that the catkins and primroses were out in the hedges; then he could not help thinking and thinking kindly, of her who was used to have an unusual delight in the spring. Not that he wished to renew his intercourse with her, which he saw clearly now to have been disadvantageous to her as well as troublesome to himself, but he hoped she was gone over to England, since he had heard nothing of her this winter. There no doubt she was

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nursing Mrs. Purvis, and would soon inherit another fortune and marry some one; perhaps "little Master," her cousin, who was an ugly, disagreeable fellow, but honest enough. These suppositions served as an anodyne to any little uneasiness of conscience that might have been caused by the recollection of his once esteemed and adored Missessy. The sunshine that had long been missing from the earth was very pleasant to feel, and his head seemed boiling with an unusual number of ideas as he trotted along, or smoked a surreptitious pipe in his library window-seat. The world was going so well with him that had he retained enough of his usual pessimism, he would have said something unfortunate must be about to happen.

One Sunday late in May, Patrick was dressing him for the Cathedral, and he was endeavouring to forget his amusement over the complete success of his last literary fraud, and attune his mind to the sacred function in which he was about to take part. Patrick was talking; he always talked, and the dean listened or not according to his humour. On this day he had not paid any attention to Patrick's discourse, till the name Vanhomrigh attracted his attention.

"Eh? H'm! What was that you was saying, you chatterpie?"

"Thunder and turf! His riverence gets hard of hearing! I was saying, your honour," and here Patrick raised his voice to a shout, "Mrs. Smith's own woman met Miss Vanhomrigh's man in the town to-day, and he tould her his poor lady was mighty sick—bless her purty face!—and he afther fetching the doctor."

"Why, I thought she was gone to England."

"Sure she never went, your riverence. She's been in a mighty queer way all this year, it seems; near crazy they do say; and now, poor lady, she's in the article of death. 'T was her own man told me so. Lord, lord! And her such an illigant crayture, and such a fine spirited way wid her too!"

"Pooh, Patrick! You servants love to exaggerate. No doubt when I have a bad head you tell all the footmen of your acquaintance the poor Dean's in the article of death. Put my bands straight. Pshaw; I say Miss Vanhomrigh 'll live to a hundred! My hat, I say; the bell will be down and you still jabbering. I know not whose curse we bear—'t is certainly not the curse of Adam—when we must needs feed this pack of lying varlets."

And still muttering he went out.

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But he could not banish from his mind this bit of news, probably false, since all Patrick's news was false, which he had heard. It pursued him through the cathedral service, and he kept wondering how far it was true while mechanically repeating the usual prayers. He found himself taking it more and more seriously, and, giving way to a strange kind of horror, a something like remorse, although he knew of no just grounds for such a feeling. While he stood up in his stall in the choir listening to the anthem, which always bored him and to-day was unusually long, this feeling increased upon him, and he was conscious of a throbbing in the head and a general tension of the nerves, such as was often symptomatic of one of his attacks. The organ was playing very low, and one boy was singing with a pure but somewhat veiled soprano voice, inexpressive as a bird's and sounding thinly in the large crowded church. Suddenly, high and wild above the low booming of the organ and the thin trickle of song, there rung out a shriek; a woman's shriek of agony, at once hoarse and shrill. The sound gave him a terrible shock; he leaned far out from his stall and looked down the aisle to the west end, whence the shriek appeared to have come, and there he saw a woman in a white dress wringing her hands and weeping wildly. He distinctly saw Esther Vanhomrigh. Forgetful of the anthem, the dignity of his office and the many eyes upon him, he left his place and stalked down the whole length of the cathedral. Many of the people had left their seats, and a little crowd was collected at the west end.

"Where is she?" asked the Dean sternly, scarcely lowering his voice. A verger, more decorous than his superior, pointed to a poor woman of the shop-keeping class, stout and elderly, who lay on the ground in convulsions, while a doctor, kneeling at her side, cut open her sleeve preparatory to bleeding her.

"Who shrieked and caused this tumult?"

"'Twas her, your reverence. Faith, the poor lady is in a strong fit and couldn't hinder herself, Mr. Dean."

"Ay, but the lady in white?"

No one had seen a lady in white, unless a child sitting on a bench outside the pews, who had jumped up to see what was the matter, could be considered a lady. The doors were closed, and, looking carefully round the church he satisfied himself that there was no one present resembling Miss Vanhomrigh. The blood that horror had frozen in his veins flowed on with a leap; he

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blushed a dark red as he walked up the aisle more hastily than he had come down it, and regained his stall as the anthem was ended. What a trick had his short sight and his fancy combined to play him! It was ludicrous. He was in that excited condition when a very poor joke or no joke at all will sometimes strike a person as irresistibly funny. His demeanour during the service was as a rule punctiliously reverent, but when, immediately on reaching his seat, he kneeled down to join in the prayer for the King's Majesty, he could no longer restrain his amusement. He seldom felt any inclination to laugh aloud, but just on this occasion he could have made the choir ring with his mirth. Fortunately he was able to moderate it to some extent, though not to stop it. As he kneeled with his face plunged in the voluminous folds of his sleeves, the curls of his peruke continued to tremble and his broad shoulders to shake and heave in a prolonged paroxysm of laughter which shocked himself; on account not of its cause, but of its impropriety in the sacred building. The canon sitting next to him, who was accustomed to hear him following the prayers in a whisper and joining loudly in the Amens, could not but observe his unusual demeanour. Knowing him to be a kind-hearted man, and supposing him to have gone to the other end of the cathedral with a view to assisting the sick person there, he took the Dean's emotion to be of an opposite nature to that which it really was. As the canon happened to be the only one of the chapter who understood that he had a great man for his dean, he took note of the little incident, and added it to his private collection of anecdotes, illustrating the compassionate nature of the most remorseless of satirists. It is fair to say that the rest were more genuine.

By the time the prayers were over he had recovered both from his untimely merriment and the disquieting effect of Patrick's bit of news. He would send a note to a cousin of Miss Vanhomrigh's in Dublin and ask after her, but in all probability it was some very slight complaint from which she was suffering. So he smiled with particular cheerfulness at P. P. T., waiting for him as usual at the south door, just on the spot which he afterwards chose for her grave, and they walked over to the Deanery together; Dingley too must accompany them. He did not always postpone dinner till after the afternoon prayers, but to-day there were some gentlemen from a distance expected, and the dinner had been put late to suit their convenience. Before it was over he received a line from Miss Vanhomrigh's cousin,

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stating she had been a little indisposed, but that nothing had been heard of her for some weeks, and "no news is good news." Mrs. Johnson was rather tired and went home early, but the gentlemen lingered on in the dining-room till late in the evening, not indeed drinking heavily, which the Dean did not permit, but enjoying a regale of coffee and conversation.

Dr. Sheridan was there, and he and Swift exchanged volleys of punning wit, such as now delights none but the writer of burlesques, but from which intelligent persons in those days contrived to extract amusement. The talk, however, was far from being all of such a nature, for Mr. Ford had just received a letter from Erasmus Lewis giving a detailed account of how the man Wood had bought from the K——'s mistress—the very sum paid was mentioned—the privilege of issuing a new copper coinage for Ireland; how it was to be much more debased than the English, even if this Wood fulfilled his contract honestly, and whereas in England the copper coinage was scarce more than a hundredth part of the currency, in Ireland it was proposed to make it as much as a quarter. Something of all this the audience knew, but their wrath rose as the details, some old and some fresh and some false or exaggerated, were marshalled before them. Dr. Winter, who was a mathematician, whipped out a piece of paper and speedily proved it would cost the country fifty thousand pounds.

"Why, sir," said a gentleman from Wexford, with an oath, "all the gold and silver in the country will immediately find its way into the pockets of landlords in England, and we that live on our own estates must be content with dirty stuff, which none that are not obliged will say 'thank you' for, and which will be worth nothing in exchange with the money of other countries."

"'T will be the ruin of our commerce," cried another. "But that no doubt was Walpole's chief design in the matter."

"'T was Sunderland sold the privilege to Kendal," interposed Delany.

"May be; but doubtless Walpole moved the fat Vrow to demand it," said Swift. "Ay, ay, wherever there's wickedness and corruption, you may take your oath Flimnap—— Walpole I mean 's in it."

"Let's drink to his damnation. Pass the bottle!" cried Mr. Ford, and filled his glass.

"And to Wood's and the German hag's," added his neighbour,

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surveying the diminished contents of the bottle somewhat anxiously.

"If we must drink damnation to every one that's tarred with that brush, my cellar will not last it out, nor will there be lying room under my table for the fallen," said Swift drily. "But 'tis not persons, 'tis the system that's most damnable. The king's mistress has as good a right as the king's ministers to sell that which belongs to neither of 'em. How long are we to be treated like slaves? As long, I suppose, as we consent to it. What does it matter to us if this ironmonger coins his soul and body into halfpence for us, if we don't take 'em?"

"Well said!" cried several; "Mr. Dean, we'll beat Walpole yet."

"I fear 't will be a difficult undertaking," observed Delany, who was patriotic, but somewhat wanting in courage and enthusiasm.

"Difficult!" ejaculated the Dean. "Ay, there are plenty of men fancy an enterprise condemned as impossible when they have pronounced it to be difficult. If 't were easy you'd not find me troubling to undertake it."

"How do you purpose to begin?" asked Winter.

The Dean shook his head and smiled.

"The oracle is dumb, Winter."

"I wish," said another, "there was some chance of Walpole coming soon to the gallows, and then I doubt we should find he had left as edifying a last speech and confession as the late lamented Elliston."

This was a notorious street-robber, executed about a year before, whose purported last dying speech and confession, wherein he declared himself to have denounced all his old associates so that they might be proceeded against if they did not abandon their evil practices, had been circulated in Dublin, and had produced consternation among the criminal classes. But the better informed suspected the genuineness of the Dying Speech and Confession, and even thought they could guess its real author.

"Then should we be as free from tyranny and corruption in Dublin, as we are now from street-robbery," said Delany with a smile.

"'Twas an excellent thought, whoever it belonged to, to print the rogue's confession," returned Swift gravely. "I'm told there's scarce been the least theft on the streets this twelvemonth."

"'Tis an odd thing, though, the fellow held so good a pen,"

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said Winter slily; "I cannot help suspecting that if Walpole should attempt the same, their styles would be found to resemble each other surprisingly."

"Your riverence," interposed Patrick, in an agitated whisper, "there's a gintleman without that's afther seeing you on a matther of life and death, and there's no denying him at all, at all. Indeed, sir, he'll take no denial."

Swift had changed his seat after dinner, in order to hob-nob more freely with Sheridan, and the door, which Patrick held wide open, was immediately behind him. The untimely visitor in his impatience had followed Patrick and stood but a little way back from the threshold of the room. The light from a sconce near fell on his face. Swift had not turned his head, but lifting his eyes as Patrick spoke, he met the stranger's eyes looking out at him from a mirror on the opposite wall. These eyes meeting his so unexpectedly, the apparition of that white stern face arising like a ghost opposite him in the midst of his festivity, startled and disturbed him as much as though it had been the ancient writing on the wall. He turned and made sure it really was Miss Vanhomrigh's cousin Francis; then he flung away his dinner-napkin and stepped out into the hall, closing the door sharply behind him.

"Is Miss Vanhomrigh sick?" he asked of his visitor, without ceremony.

"Dying," replied Francis shortly. His eyes were worn and red with watching and secret tears, and his whole face looked older by several years than it had done in the autumn.

"Impossible!" cried Swift, turning pale. "Good Heaven, sir, there must be some hope!"

"None at all. 'Tis a question of a few hours," returned Francis. "She is urgent to see you. I think she is wandering, but I could not forbear promising to bring you."

Swift was deeply affected.

"This is terrible," he said. "Poor, poor Missessy! Poor dear child! 'Tis so sudden I cannot feel it true."

"There is not a moment to lose," said Francis. "If you mean to come, order your best horse out at once. Mine is having a mash, and will go back as fast as he came."

The Dean hastily gave the order. He would not return to the dining-room lest his agitation should be visible, but rushed upstairs to change his gown for a riding-dress, while Francis went out to fetch his horse from the stables of a neighbouring

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inn. In an incredibly short space of time they were crossing the bridge at a sharp trot, side by side. The Dean would have liked to inquire further concerning Essie's condition, but he had an unaccountable feeling of embarrassment in addressing Francis. Besides, the noise of the streets, which on this fine moonlight evening were full of traffic, seemed an unfitting accompaniment to conversation so solemn and distressing as theirs must needs be. So he wrapped himself in reflections that every moment became more poignant. They took the way by Phœnix Park, and Francis being a little ahead when they arrived, had no sooner touched the turf than he let his horse break into a gallop. The Dean's big horse, which though naturally not so fast was fresher, started eagerly in pursuit, and the two dark shapes flew on neck and neck across the pale open stretches of the park, till the ground dipped and they were blotted out in the dark shadows of some thorn-trees. When they regained the road they breathed their horses, and the Dean almost timidly addressed his companion.

"Is not this sickness, sir, very sudden?"

"No, sir," replied Francis. "This violent fever is sudden, but she has been sick ever since the autumn, and has taken no manner of care of her health till very lately. I endeavoured to make her more careful of herself while I was with her, but to no purpose."

"Ah, poor child!" cried the Dean, no longer able to restrain his tears. "She was used to have such good health; no doubt she could not believe she was ill."

"No, sir, that was not it!" returned Francis. "But she was indifferent whether she was ill or well, or lived or died. Why do you weep, Mr. Dean? Was not you just as indifferent? I never heard that you made the least inquiry after her."

"Mr. Mordaunt," replied Swift, with a kind of dignified humility, "you have the right to reproach me, for you have been a true friend to poor Missessy, and I have not. I have been tender when I should have been severe, and hard when indulgence would have better become me. But indeed, Mr. Mordaunt, it has been more for her sake and another's than my own, that I have refrained from a reconcilation with her. You know, perhaps, we quarrelled."

"I know you broke her heart," cried Francis, "if you call that quarrelling. You have killed her, Dr. Swift, as certainly as though you had put a bullet in it."

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As he had ridden silent at his companion's side, his former relations to Esther had presented themselves to Swift in a new light. This was partly owing to the shock of this summons to her death-bed, and partly because he had considered the subject so little during the last eight months that the mist of old habit and sentiment, which had once obscured it to the eyes of his judgment, had had time to clear away. He condemned himself, but this last condemnation was more than his reason or his feelings could accept.

"Sir," he said, "you are a young man, and grief and resentment lead you too far. I fear 'tis true that Miss Vanhomrigh was more affected by the unhappy difference between us than I at all guessed; but a broken heart was never yet found out of a play or a romance. Believe me, poor Essie will live if she has no other disease than that."

"She has," replied Francis, "and yet I confidently believe that were it not for you, we that love her should now see her as well and strong as ever she was in England. I cannot, sir, affect a desire to spare you grief and pain. You spared her none. I tell you that when I left her at Christmas she was utterly reckless of her health, and seemed to desire death if she could be said to desire anything. She drove me most unwillingly from her side, and I went, hoping that my absence would cause her in some degree to miss me, and that on my return she would consent to come with me as my wife to a country where the air was wholesome for her complaint, and where she might forget her misfortunes. She wrote to me scarcely ever, but her old serving-woman, that was nurse to both of us, wrote me at last as well as she could, poor creature, that can scarce write at all. She told me Essie had altered since the winter was over, and was no longer so dull, but sometimes in a kind of fever which, the old creature thought, made her almost wandering in her mind, though she would never to bed for it. And just as I was starting to go, Essie herself wrote me to come, and how she was ill, but would be married as soon as I pleased and go to America, and hoped so to get her health again. And I was fool enough to think all going very well."

He was silent.

"How long since was it that you returned?" asked Swift.

"About a month. I never thought to have found her so ill. I thought there could be nothing worse than her indifference to her life, but yet there was. For somehow—whether 't was she

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had hurried down the valley of the shadow with an unnatural speed for one of her age and strength, or whether 't was the spring coming, I know not, but somehow she had grown afeared of death. And 't was too late, for she was very sick, though still walking about when I returned. She 'd say to me: 'I don't want to die, Frank. I thought I did, but now I'm so sick I'm afeared on 't. Don't let me die. Take me to America, where you think I shall get well, but I dursn't, for she was not strong enough to bear the voyage. And then this fever came. That's but a few days since."

"Poor dear Essie!" cried Swift in a trembling voice. "She would weep if she heard of a stranger that died young, and say what a dreadful thing it was to be cut off in the prime. She seemed so full of life, I cannot yet believe there's no hope."

"You will presently then see there's no room for it," returned Francis. "There is no room now for anything but repentance. And what can that avail?"

"Young man," returned Swift, "with God I trust it may, though not with you. He knows my blindness, and how much I have erred through that—how much through wilful sin."

"Were you to repent for a hundred years, and lash yourself worse than an enthusiast monk," said Francis, "'t would not recall Essie to life, nor give me back— Well, no matter."

"Mr. Mordaunt," returned Swift solemnly, "if I could at this moment offer my miserable life in exchange for hers, 'tis inexpressible how gladly I would do it."

"There's but one thing more that either you or I can do for her," said Francis, "and that is to be with her before she dies."

They spurred their horses and trotted along the road by the river. The slow tears coursed each other down Swift's cheeks as he rode, and he prayed long and earnestly that God would of His mercy spare the life of Esther Vanhomrigh, or if that might not be, that He would graciously receive her spirit, remembering her many virtues, and blotting out her sins from His book, or adding them to the sum of those for which the erring man now supplicating Him must one day answer.

As they went on, the few and twinkling lights disappeared from the roadside cottages. The full white moon was high in the cloudless deep of heaven, and the sounds of the warm summer night were all about their path; the splash of leaping fish, the sleepy chirrup of birds disturbed by some night-wandering creature; the song of the reed-warbler, the persistent

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churring of the night-jar, and the occasional hoot of an owl, far off on some ancestral tree. It was such an exquisite May night, full of the mystery and beauty of moonlight and the scent of hawthorn, as makes the earth an Eden in which none but lovers should walk—happy lovers or young poets, whose large eyes, so blind in the daylight world of men, can see God walking in the Garden. Somewhere, no doubt, in this wide beautiful world of night, those ever new creations were looking round with wonder and delight on their inheritance, but here on the banks of the Liffey, there was none to enter into it. The weary labourers slept in their closed cottages, and nothing human was stirring except these two men, hurrying along the white road with no wish but to put it behind them as quickly as possible; men united by a common sorrow, but divided by bitter feelings of resentment and remorse.

Meantime at Cellbridge old Ann was anxiously awaiting the return of Master Francis. She was grown really old now, and though still strong enough in body to perform the functions of a nurse, she was nervous and unable to control her invalid. Esther had always refused to keep her bed. She sat propped up in a large chair by the fire. All day she had been breathing with difficulty, but in the evening she had seemed better and fallen into an uneasy slumber. Presently she woke, but her manner was so strange that though she said little, Ann feared she was wandering in her mind. She bade the old woman bring out and spread before her certain dresses lying by in a wardrobe; fine clothes for which she had found little use during the past few years. One by one she looked at them all, and had them put away again, till at last a *négligé* of white silk brocade was unfolded from its wrappings of paper.

"There, there!" she cried, "I care nothing for the mode. I will have it white. Dress me in that."

"Alas, my pretty dear miss," returned the old nurse, "the dead may wear nought but woollen."

Esther smiled.

"Come hither, Ann," she said, and took the nurse's hand when she was come close up to her. "You mistake. 'Tis no wonder you should, but 'tis all a mistake. I am not in a decline, as poor Moll was. Something dreadful came, I cannot remember what, but it touched my heart and turned it into a stone." And she laïd Ann's hand on her thin bosom. "'Tis a fearful pain—no, 'tis worse than pain, to walk about with a great

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stone in your bosom, and no doubt I must have died of it if he had not come. But he did come while I slept, and touched my heart himself. You can feel now 'tis quite warm and beats again. I am well this morning and, Ann, I am going to be married. My mamma will be pleased, won't she?"

"Oh, my poor lamb!" cried the old woman. "Pray recollect yourself and think of your latter end."

Esther laughed feebly. "Thou old infidel! Do I not look well? Oh, sure I must! Make haste now to dress my hair, for I dare not be late. He was ever exact."

She sat bolt upright in her chair, and with trembling fingers the old woman began to comb and pin up her thick hair.

"Why, Ann, what are you doing?" asked Esther impatiently. "Where are my curls?"

It was years since the mode of wearing a few curls loose on the neck had gone out, and she had long abandoned it. Ann, obedient to her fancy, arranged her fair curls in the old way. Then with extraordinary strength she rose, and pulling off her wrapper, began to put on the white silk *négligé*. Old Ann, seeing her not to be dissuaded, helped her on with it, and put more wraps round her. But she walked to the window letting them trail off her as she went. Drawing aside the curtain, "Sunshine!" she said, smiling to herself, as she looked out on the moonlight; "'tis well, very well."

And she returned smiling to her chair, as though she had pleasant thoughts. Indeed her wandering fancy had conjured up again the scene on the steps of the London church, on that May morning ten years ago.

"I must have 'em," she cried, "a great posy of 'em. 'Twill be better than pearls for my wedding, for they do say pearls mean tears. And I won't have any more tears, no, nor so much as think of them, for I have shed such a many—— Ah! no one would believe!—— Ann, call Thomas, and bid him bring me a fine posy of the blue forget-me-nots from the meadow by the river. There's plenty of 'em there, all growing together. He can't miss seeing them."

"God ha' mercy on you, Miss Essie, my dear!" ejaculated the old woman trembling. "Pray, pray to Him to give you back your senses before you go."

"If you'll not call him, I must myself," returned Esther pettishly, and rose to her feet, crying out feebly, "Thomas! Thomas!"

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Ann would have replaced her in her chair, but could not, and the scant tears of age began to gather in her dim eyes. While she was still attempting to calm and restrain her nursling, she heard the creaking tread of men in riding boots coming up the stairs as softly as they might. She desisted from her attempts as Francis, opening the door, stood on one side and let the Dean pass before him.

Swift, lividly pale, but making a great effort to restrain his emotion, advanced two steps into the room and paused. He had expected to see a figure stretched upon the bed, perhaps unconscious; perhaps alive enough to whisper reproach or forgiveness. He saw Esther fully dressed, upright, though leaning with one hand on the foot of the bed. She was fearfully changed since he had seen her last. Her cheeks were hollow; her neck and arms, a few months ago so round and white, were wasted and bloodless. He was shocked at her appearance, yet it was by no means so deathlike as it had been earlier in the day; for her eyes glittered with an unnatural brightness, and there was a feverish colour in her cheeks. As soon as she saw him she stepped up to him with surprising firmness, and putting her two hands on his shoulders, said, looking at him tenderly—

"So you are come, Cadenus."

"Yes, yes, I came immediately, Missessy," he answered, pulling down one of her hands and holding it in his own.

"I knew you would be punctual to your time," she returned. "I am glad the morning is so fair. Do you remember what the old woman said? 'Happy the bride the sun shines on'!"

"Get her back, and let me close this door," said Francis.

"No, no, let us go out," said Esther. "They all talk as though I were sick, but I am quite cured, am I not, Cadenus? You know how."

"I trust in God it may be so," answered Swift, choking with tears and bowing his face upon her hand.

"Yes, I am very well. Let us make haste, for the people are all waiting to see. Why should we hide? I want them all to see the happiest, proudest woman in the world. Your bride—O Heavens, Cadenus!—your wife."

And flinging her arms round his neck she buried her head in his bosom.

"O God," he groaned, "O God!"

Then, controlling his anguish by a great effort, he spoke gently but firmly in her ear,

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"Essie, I implore you in the name of our Saviour to put away these deceitful fancies, and remember what has passed and who and where we are."

She raised her head and stood before him, looking in his face with an anxious bewildered gaze.

"Essie," he went on with clasped hands and the tears running down his cheeks, "I have come hither to acknowledge my fault and earnestly beg your forgiveness."

As he spoke, the light of reason slowly dawned in her eyes, and the brilliancy of fever began to fade. She made a step or two backward and caught hold of the bedpost with one hand.

"Hesskin," he said, "I have been a poor friend to you."

She fixed her eyes on him with an intent look of full recognition, and leaned back against the bed.

Francis closed the door gently. Esther did not speak, but, the look which she had fixed upon Swift grew to be a look of horror and anguish.

"Forgive me," he tried to say, covering his face with his hand.

She did not move, except that he thought he saw her stagger and stepped forward to catch hold of her. She audibly gasped, and made a movement as though to repel his hands. Then again she looked on him with that dreadful gaze. It seemed to him an eternity that he stood with bowed head beneath it, but it was really but a few seconds. Then she fell backwards on the bed, and before a hand could be stretched to save her, rolled heavily on to the floor. So quickly, they knew not how it was done, Swift and Francis lifted her back on to the bed, and each peered in her face, oblivious of the other. The stamp of death was set upon it. Old Ann put a feather into Francis' hand, and he held it to his cousin's mouth, but neither of the two men eagerly bending over her could be certain whether or no she yet breathed. Surely, surely she must. Unconsciously their hands met upon her bosom, and beneath those two hands, touching each other now for the last time, the stormy heart of Esther Vanhomrigh heaved once and was for ever still.

THE END.

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A STUDY OF MR. GEORGE MEREDITH.

"OBSERVATION is the most enduring of the pleasures of life." This is Mr. George Meredith's conclusion, as expressed in one of his latest books. It is a dictum of the Master who is our greatest living novelist,—of a student who has long and minutely investigated the springs and aims of human action, and it forms an apt comment on the writer's own attitude and the impression left by his work in fiction.

Meredith is a terribly clear-sighted psychological observer, a keen and subtle analyst of character, and the more obscure workings of the mind. As a genial, or enthralling teller of a story he does not take a high place, rather he often falls into the anomalous and scarcely defensible position of a novelist who does not amuse. Despite his great dramatic power, and brilliant wit and fancy, he can be hard reading, and does not always succeed in laying an irresistible grasp on the attention. The plot of his stories is seldom much elaborated. The narrative is often merely brought together (with great skill) on the single thread of some central personality, around which the action develops, while the background may be even lavishly filled in with subordinate characters, incident and epigrammatic dissertation. His personages are complete and complex men and women, dramatically presented, drawn with much humour and insight, and moving in an atmosphere laden with thought and poetry, or iridescent with imagery, wit, and fancy; each of the figures having, as it were, a glass side, or peep-hole in its breast, through which we may peer into its soul and discern the machinery and springs of action. Even his brilliant epigrammatic faculty is chiefly used as an instrument for the delicate probing and discrimination of motive. The interest hangs on the development of character, incident is used to display, events to mould it, while the less successful among Meredith's works are those in which this tendency is allowed to run riot. Figures such as Roy

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Richmond, Alvan, even Emilia, Nevil Beauchamp, or Victor Radnor (though in some cases studies from life, and admirably treated), are, in their essence, attempts to convey impressions of individualities of unusual strength and attraction, clever if somewhat wild fantasias on the strange and wonderful phenomena of personal influence or magnetism.

Mr. Meredith's latest novel, 'One of our Conquerors,' contains a lesson of sympathy with the rebel who has Nature on his side against convention. He punishes his insurgents heavily, in good orthodox fashion, knowing that the plea of the exceptional nature, a law unto itself, must be handled, like dynamite, with infinite precaution and many safeguards; but his treatment of a difficult situation shows rare justness of view, daring humour, and a right and noble sentiment, wholly free from cant, bravado, or hypocrisy. The awakening of Nesta's apprehension of the realities of life, of Nesta, the fire-souled and vivid, with her "resonant nature," "enigma's mouth and eyes of morning," forms, as it were a pendant to that of the eager youth, Richard Feverel, thus connecting Mr. Meredith's latest novel with one of his earliest, in a curious completeness. 'One of our Conquerors' is a book for the elect, who, as its writer says, "see signification and catch flavour." Its manner may sometimes lend itself to parody, or stave off the sluggishminded, but "there is no grasping one who quickens," says Mr. Meredith, and his richly suggestive method may well be treacherous in less inspired moments.

Mr. Meredith possesses a marvellous gift of intuition, which enables him to follow the most intricate involutions of the human mind, and trace the formation of character through the complex action of native disposition and outer circumstance. The growth of an intellect, the unfolding of a character on trial, the sway of the passions, subtle varieties of love, ambition or egotism, antipathies, varieties, idiosyncrasies, are examined with a strangely acute vision. What, for instance, can be finer than the progress of Clara Middleton's gradual apprehension of Sir Willoughby Patterne's nature? The Egoist, in all good faith and infatuation, unfolds himself to his promised bride, by monotonous disquisitions on his eternal theme, while as she grasps the drift of his amazing revelations her own character develops, and she rises to the level of the effort required to separate herself from him. The situation is adroitly handled, and most skilfully unravelled. Clara, by applying her touchstone of truth and nobleness, obtains the key to the cloaked nature of her betrothed, while he is still

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able to deceive and dazzle all around. Her position resembles that of the disillusioned mortal who had been kissed by the Fairy Queen, and knew her to be but a shrivelled hag on a broomstick, though for others she still retained the semblance of a fair and gracious lady.

"Blood to the hero—blood! Brains to the veiled virginal doll, the heroine!" cries Mr. Meredith in a burst of indignation with the painted wax puppets of the conventional novelist. His own "radiant" Diana, the "flecked heroine of reality," with her "thrilling and topping voice," her "spirit leaping and shining like mountain water," her "delicious chatter or museful sparkle in listening that quickened every sense of life," her sentences that "fell with a ring and chimed," has of "brain stuff" almost a superfluity. Yet with all her quick-wittedness she has hardly a touch of cynicism. Her full-blooded healthy nature, warm heart, and capacious soul, could not confine itself within the rigid limits of well-meant but narrow conventionalities. She does not defy the world from bravado or mere love of turbulence, but simply overflows barriers which are too strait for the satisfaction of her effervescent nature. "Let me be myself, whatever the martyrdom," she desperately cries. Mr. Meredith is a discriminating friend and champion of women, and "Diana of the Crossways" is in its essence one long plea for increased liberty for her sex, and its exemption from the dogmatic tyranny of the "class that is governed in its estimates of character by accepted patterns of conduct." The book is indeed written with the avowed object of showing how a beautiful, talented, and warm-hearted woman may pass through the most equivocal situations, ungenial married life, divorce proceedings, want of money; be the trusted "Egeria" of those in high place, and yet remain pure, high-minded, and stainless, in spite of damning appearances. It is a lesson in tolerance and thinking no evil. The outline of Diana's character and the main situations in the book are well known to be borrowed, yet Mr. Meredith has set his own stamp upon them, Diana's racy drollery is indeed scarcely seized, though we are repeatedly informed of its existence, but her nervous Irish nature is most thoroughly realized, and made to account for her strange and sudden mistakes in conduct. "Irishmen, like horses, are bundles of nerves, it is explained, and still more Irishwomen!" If Diana sometimes rushes off the track, it must be set down to her spirited and highly strung nature. "When I drove down that night," she says (the night she revealed the fateful secret), "I am

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certain I had my clear wits, but I felt like a bolt. I saw things, but at too swift a rate for the conscience of them."

This portrait of Diana was evidently with Mr. Meredith a labour of love. A sweet, simple child like Lucy Desborough is not his ideal, and cynical touches intrude even on the most charming passages written in her praise. We feel that the author would himself never have fallen in love with her, and we hardly dare to make fools of ourselves under his coldly critical eye; as he calmly points out and dilates on her attractions, in the "Keepsake" style of description, blue eyes, golden curls, sweetness, innocence, and — "Love's penny whistle." Mrs. Lovell, "the distinguished sitter in an easy drawing-room chair," jumps much more naturally with his humour than even stern and tragic Rhoda Fleming, with her painfully learned correction and gentility. Artistic innocence suits him better than blushing simplicity. He is most successful with complex and cultured natures, for he is too subtle and ingenious to deal quite happily with genuine artlessness. His style does not suit such portraiture. Mr. Meredith's real goddess is Mind; simplicity he exalts, no doubt sincerely enough, but with a taint of the hyperbolical.

In the treatment of Diana, his epigrammatic force and swiftness of expression is at its best, and his powers are employed in depicting a figure with which they are essentially in sympathy. Without departing from truth, he possesses in a high degree the poetic faculty of transporting his reader into a world of his own creation, where even the most extraordinary behaviour may appear natural and inevitable in the scheme of things which is for the time to be accepted. Thus Diana's perhaps over-brilliant talk would appear to be pitched in a natural key. Her sayings are the crowning froth and sparkle on a goblet full of heady and stimulating liquor, not isolated flashes in a world of flat commonplace, or the vain, yet spirited efforts of the one blood-mare in a team of draught-horses to start the waggon at gallop up hill. The pace throughout has been quickened to fall in step with her, and the pages fly past sparkling with dry keen wit or sharply cut epigram, not wanting in the "idea which is the only vital breath." The moral is subordinate, and yet so clear, that the story might have been written as a vehicle for that alone. A rich thoughtfulness and reminiscent imagination throws illuminating shafts over a wide field of vexed questions of the day, as well as on those problems which are always with us. It is true that a certain strain does often disfigure the

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writing, but in spite of the "pointed flame which tempts the flat-minded to call her actress," the radiant Diana, with her warm Irish impulsiveness, is a living and sympathetic personality, and one of the most striking and complete figures in the author's long gallery of heroines.

But as a demonstrator of character Mr. Meredith has much else to show. His best creations are supple and living, exhibiting growth and development. His conceptions are elastic—he does not throw his men and women into cast-iron moulds, or distribute to each neatly labelled packets of qualities. He has much understanding of childhood, and the passive receptivity of undeveloped minds. He notes the fantastic, dream-like proportions events assume to a child's mind; their interjectional nature, through lack of knowledge of the links connecting cause and effect. Harry Richmond's father became his boyish hero to such an extent, that all that took place in his absence, "was like music going on till the curtain should lift and reveal my father to me." But, all the same, though "I studied him eagerly, I know, and yet quite unconsciously, *I came to no conclusion.*" "Boys are always putting down the ciphers of their observations of people beloved by them, but do not add up a sum total."

'The Ordeal of Richard Feverel,' is a fine study of the effects of an abnormal moral education. "Other men were tried by puny ailments, the Feverels were searched and shaken by one tremendous shock as of a stroke of Heaven's lightning"—the so-called ordeal. This is only, however, what may be said of most intense, delicately balanced, or highly-strung natures. Concentration of interest, the capacity for living in a world of ideas, may blind them to much, and be proof against "puny" strokes; but such minds when once thrown from their imaginative pinnacle are totally incapable of again scaling the airy height which they had reached by means of an unconscious idealism. They would be unable, in fact, to maintain themselves there now that the cobweb bands, spun by inexperienced hope and enthusiasm, to sustain them in their godlike pose on unsubstantial footing, have been broken through, crushed and ruthlessly destroyed. Unwittingly, the provident Sir Austin, in guarding his son from free contact with realities, was carefully preparing him to suffer the more certainly and intensely in his passage through the ordeal of the first practical awakening of the pure-minded Dreamer.

The philosopher of the 'Pilgrim's Scrip' is treated with

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delicate insight and a keen though quiet sense of humour. Of the specifically humorous characters, Mrs. Berry is no doubt the most successful. Other figures in this work ('The Ordeal of Richard Feverel'), though intended to afford a relief to the intense seriousness of the interest, and informed with wit and wisdom of the right Meredithian quality, incline nevertheless to the stagey or burlesque. Such are the dyspeptic Uncle Hippias, the heavy Benson, Mrs. Caroline Grandison, or even Adrian Harley, the "Wise Youth."

Rollicking fun or genial drollery do not flow so easily from Mr. Meredith's pen as the aphorisms of the 'Pilgrim's Scrip;' even Diana's wit is over-ingenious, and often a mere play of antithetical brilliances. That curiously fantastic burlesque medley, 'The Shaving of Shagpat,' is written throughout in a mock-heroic vein, with images often grotesquely grandiose, and a purposely inflated style. The exuberance of fancy and the versatility it shows are, however, simply amazing, and it has a rare poetical quality. The story of Bhanavar the Beautiful, for example, the conception of the terrible sorceress whose beauty could only be preserved through the annual sacrifice of one who loved her, is very fine, and there is much fanciful humour and ironic power throughout the book. Published in 1855, it already shows a singular aptitude for aphoristic writing.

Mr. Meredith's instinct for humour is not always quite true. It is too far-fetched and elaborate, too self-conscious, or tinged with satire and cynicism. The attempts at pure comedy are often abortive, and but poor fooling. Mrs. Sumfit, Master Gammon and the dumplings; Tom Cogglesby and Mrs. Melchisedec Harrington at the Dolphin, and other scenes of the like nature, though evidently intended to be side-splitting, command but a forced laughter. Mr. Meredith's claims as a humorist rest rather on his more delicate exhibitions of the quality. The exposition of the workings of Sir Willoughby's mind abounds in fine touches, as does the Countess de Saldar de Sancorvo's campaign against class distinctions in Evan Harrington. Sir Austin Feverel is treated with immovable features, but with a keen and relishing perception of refined absurdity.

Mr. Meredith's humour is connected with his point of view, and is a part of his philosophy. He maintains for the most part an attitude of suspended judgment, the posture of a patient unprejudiced spectator, discriminating delicate shades of conduct, or motive. He tells us that his aim is to show men and their

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passions at "blood-heat," keeping himself "calm as a statue of Memnon in prostrate Egypt." A "passive receptivity of shine and shade I hold it good to aim at." It would seem that Mr. Meredith is not aware that "blood-heat" is electric and cannot be imparted without feeling as a generator. A hollow imitation of the laughter of the gods, is apt to ring falsely in the mouths of mortals.

Life to Mr. Meredith is a game, though it is true he watches the moves of the pieces with keen and serious interest. His characters are machines which he expounds to us. He is a psychological showman.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, walk this way! Here is an interesting model never before placed under the microscope. Observe the dull blood running through the heart, how slow and pulseless! Note that subtle manifestation of egoism, that burst of emotion! This exhibit, on the contrary, is morally well put together, and shows the action of a noble unselfishness. This interesting creature has gleams of poetry and grace,"—and so on, and so on, till the brain grows wearied and confused with hearkening to the whirr of the wheels of our mental clockwork. This dissection of the human soul is, however, done with marvellous dramatic skill, and an exquisitely handled knife. The exposition is not *doctrinaire* or dogmatic, but rather empirical and living, proceeding by examples rather than by theory, and bears the impress of a mind of high quality and rarest insight, being in fact, after all deductions, the work of true genius.

In respect of style, Mr. Meredith is a worshipper of the well-said, of wit, of the art of "condensing our purest sense to golden sentences to strike roots in the mind," though sometimes, to use his own ingenious simile, his phrases are rather "lapidary sentences, having the value of chalk eggs which lure the thinker to sit." Like his Diana, he "thinks in flashes," rather than continuously and connectedly. Perhaps a certain want of method in thought, some mental untidiness, or effervescence, is favourable to the production of art and epigram. In a well-ordered, neatly-arranged mind, where everything is labelled and laid in its place, it must be more difficult for incongruities to rush together, strike a spark, or discover their subtle affinities. Mr. Meredith is a concoctor of witty aphorisms, a coiner of antithetical phrases. Sometimes even words are issued with his stamp. "A writer who is not servile and has insight must coin from his own mint," he boldly tells us. In practice, however, he

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is more apt to twist a word slightly from its original signification, or force its meaning than actually to add to the currency. Thus he says that Alvan had a "hissing" reputation, *i.e.* a reputation that stirred the snakes and geese of the world. At other times he will invent somewhat inorganic and cumbrous compound words, as when he tells us that at the cry of invasion England was in a "poultry-flutter." A "rapid phraser" like his own Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson, who detested the analysis of her sentences, his expressions having often an "outline in vagueness, and are flung out to be apprehended, not dissected." This method might be described as an impressionist use of words as opposed to the realistic, by which meaning is clearly made out and syllabled, instead of being shadowed forth by implication. For this author is an adept in the indirect conveyance of meaning, and has a curious habit of incidentally throwing out remarks which illuminate his own production, serving as hints for criticism. He has a living use of words, his diction is his own, a part of himself, highly expressive in its irregular strength, its half-suggestions, its adumbrative vagueness, and metaphors which flash an idea too exquisitely imaginative to be otherwise conveyed. A struggle against the commonplace is, however, too obvious in his work. Abruptness, elliptical sentences, strained meanings, imperfectly given allusions, and such "tricks of magniloquence and obscurity," betray the effort for effect. These are, however, the faults of a quick-witted, active-minded writer, whose nimble brain tempts him to play pranks to show his agility. Compelled to keep pace with the slower apprehension of his reader, he bounds around him like a young dog who is taken out for a walk by his master and is anxious to hasten the steps of his sedate biped companion.

Like Browning, Mr. Meredith is sometimes open to the charge of using the wealth of his vocabulary to disguise his meaning. He resembles Browning also in his fondness for psychological dissertation, and in his brilliant enigmatical flashes of wit, and quick forcible phrasing. Humorists are difficult, he informs us, "it is a part of their humour to puzzle our wits."

In all his books there is an abundance of material, but also a failing in artistic care, choice and severity of rejection, together with a want of consideration for the reader which fatigues and repels. As a writer Mr. Meredith seeks to dazzle and impose rather than to please. He is whimsical and wilful, and often we have to wait, as the conspirators on Monte Motterone waited for

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Agostino, until he has "exploded the last of his train of conceits." He abounds in charmingly discursive and desultory paragraphs, containing quaint discussions of abstract matters, conducted by means of metaphor and allusion. For Mr. Meredith has an allusive mind, catching at similes and figures of speech, and he expresses himself sometimes with an almost Oriental profusion of metaphor. An exuberantly fanciful vein often appears in his work, for his strong poetical feeling seeks utterance in imagery. In respect of some attributes of style, he is often compared to Carlyle or Jean Paul Richter; indeed the large number of writers to whom he has been likened for different qualities is strong evidence of the variety of his power. At times he resorts to a condensed shorthand manner, jottings and memoranda for sentences and paragraphs, rather than the things themselves. At others the strain for smartness is painfully obvious. What, for example, are we to make of a heroine who "turns her inward flutterer to steel"? or a hero who "pummels an obmutescent mass to the confusion of a conceivable epic"? His style shows indeed the most curious mixture of stilted effort, with supple and imaginative plasticity of expression.

Nature is used as a running accompaniment, touched lightly and occasionally, but with a master hand. Gem-like passages, perhaps but a few lines long, give vivid and poetic glimpses of landscape, and stand out in welcome relief from these pages of psychological subtleties.

But these graceful paragraphs are rare, single sentences containing some exquisite image or suggestion being more frequent. The play of "white sunlight on the fringed smooth roll of water by a weir," is finely felt; or exquisite little vignettes are given of the Kentish Downs lying in the evening light "stretched out like a web of fine grey silk;" of an English midland county meadow fringed with tasselled larches; of night in the Adriatic, sunrise on the Alps, or a great murky sunset spreading its deep coloured hues that "seemed like a great sorrowing over earth." The chapter "Wilming Weir," in 'Emilia in England,' contains some fine descriptive writing. It is couched in a strain of poetic mysticism and pictorial feeling, which makes it possible, perhaps, to trace an influence from the author of the 'Blessed Damozel,' and the 'House of Life' throughout the book, and notably in the heroine. Emilia, who is the representative of Passion, or "Noble strength on fire," contrasted with the Nice Feelings, Fine Shades, and Sentimentalism of the 'Ladies of Brookfield,' is certainly

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treated with something of the indescribable poetic feeling of Rossetti's allegorical manner of personification.

Mr. Meredith's books are "soul's tragedies," though the questioning is rather of earthly than heavenly mysteries, so far as it is roughly possible to disengage the two categories. The mental crises through which his characters pass are, however, tremendous enough, and are concerned with some of the most intricate and important moral problems. Mr. Meredith's work is morally sound, for he never tricks out false passion and selfishness in meretricious attractions, but a keen and clear perception of the mixed springs and aims of human action is always pathetic, and must inspire some measure of gentle tolerance. Often, too, his steadily-held divining-rod trembles as it indicates the presence of a pure fountain of truth and feeling, and the real heart of the man breaks through his *rôle* of impartiality. For a subtle irony clings around much of his work, giving hints that, interesting and ingenious little machines as we may be, we are buzzing, whirring, and fussing about, without a real object—in fact, we are only whirligigs spinning round in a circle, catching our own tails, or working a treadmill without advancing one inch further, for all our desperate activity. This, however, is chiefly to be gathered by inference, for reforms are advocated, brighter, clearer, and more hopeful views are constantly enforced. Woman is to be lifted up and humanised, and the standard of moral acquirement raised, politics purified, social distinctions rationalised, and the natural and true in feeling vindicated against the artificial or insincere.

Mr. Meredith's mind is nobly undogmatic. Like his own Shibli Bagarag the Barber, he is a Destroyer of Illusions, and whets his sword to reap a goodly crop. But his mission is not merely to destroy; he can also utter noble reproof to a world which is too prone to imagine "those to be at our nature's depths, who are impudent enough to expose its muddy shallows."

J. A. NEWTON-ROBINSON.

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THE ROMANCE OF MARY MACADAM.

PART II.

BY EDWARD A. ARNOLD.

III.

SINCE our arrival at Fort Seneca we had received frequent visits from parties of Indians belonging to the various tribes or nations, who came to trade with us, and expressed amaze at the number of our people, and the extent and strength of the works; some even expostulated with the Commandant. Was this, they asked, the trading post for which leave had been given, or was it intended by the white men to establish themselves thus strongly for the purpose of ousting the Indians from their lands? For trade, a smaller company and fewer buildings were enough. But here were stockades and arms and defences, which breathed war and conquest.

The Commandant was not the man to appease their suspicions, and remonstrance often ended in threats as they left the fort. He laughed at these threats, but wiser heads than his were troubled at the prospect; the Agent especially warned him of the danger, but uselessly, for he swore nothing would please him more than for the cursed Indians to attack us and get a taste of English steel.

At length matters drew to a crisis; a deputation of chiefs came into the camp and had an interview with the Commandant, recounting their grievances and praying their white brothers to retire from their territories, as they had no desire to trade, and were strong enough to defend themselves against the King's enemies without aid. Upon this the Commandant flew into a rage, and would have dismissed them without more ado, but was presently persuaded to postpone decision until consultation could be held on so serious a matter; and the chiefs were told that their petition should be considered and an answer given them on

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the day of the full moon, then just ten days' distant. The news spread like wildfire through the camp; but few weighed the importance of it, and the reckless soldiers were only eager to hasten the time when they could cure the impudence of the Indians, as they termed it. But the Agent and those officers who knew the helplessness of our position if we defied the red men, and yet could not bear the ignominy of deserting the post, were terribly put about; nor were they relieved by the manner of the Commandant, who seemed determined not to yield an inch or even temporize with the chiefs at their next visit. Neither could he be persuaded to send a despatch to the city for aid; if it came to fighting, were not fifty Englishmen a match for all the warriors of the Six Nations? No argument had any effect upon his attitude, and it was evident that he was as eager to risk fighting as he was confident of a successful issue.

Now there chanced to be in the camp an Indian from one of the Mohawk castles, fallen sick during a hunting-expedition, and placed in our charge by his comrades, who, luckily for him, were in need of powder for their guns, or they would have left him to die in the forest rather than come to the fort for his especial benefit. He was marvellously grateful for our care, which had soon remedied a simple disorder, and hearing what was passing, urged that at all hazards a breach with the tribes should be avoided. This was a matter that rested with the Commandant to decide, but the Agent was so confirmed in his own misgivings as to the issue of a struggle, unless some prospect of relief or reinforcement of the garrison were held out, that he concerted a plan with this Indian to fetch aid from the city ere it was too late. The faithful fellow at once started off on his mission, but with such secrecy that, being missed, he was roundly abused in camp for deserting his friends with intention, as was believed, to expose the weakness of our defences to the hostile tribes. His departure added to the Commandant's stubbornness, and when the day of the full moon approached, little doubt was felt that evening would see the alliance broken, and leave us garrisoning a post in an enemy's country.

Before noon the six chiefs came in, each attended by three warriors, who were not permitted to pass the stockade. The Commandant received them in the open space within the quadrangle attended by the whole military force drawn up under arms. The chiefs had the first word.

"Brother," said the Sachem who was their spokesman, "you

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bade us come here to-day to hear the answer of the great King, our common Father, to the petition we sent him; we are very thankful to him for listening to us. See, we have brought the ancient Covenant Chain which he gave to his children; it has been kept bright and clean, and has joined us securely together in friendship, so that neither thunder nor lightning could break it. Now we wish to add some new links to it, for we fear rust will creep in, and the chain become weak and snap unless it is made new. Formerly there were plenty of our young men to keep it bright and strong; but since this fort has been built they have been busy in trading with you, and have left their castles and attended to other things. Some, too, are angry at the encroachment on our lands; they say that paths are cut through the country and many houses are built; that soon there will be no room for us on the land, and we shall not be able to live in our castles. Truly the clouds hang heavy over us; but we hope that the great King will renew this chain and leave his children alone to maintain it in their ancient homes. Thus the sun shall shine out again, and make all things bright for the King's children in the city and in the forest alike."

Then the Commandant replied:—

"Brethren, I have invited you here in the name of the great King, our common Father, to receive the answer to your petition. It gives me great satisfaction to see this Covenant Chain so strong and bright, and to hear that you have kept it inviolate and free from rust. We too wish it to remain firm and unbroken as it has been from the beginning. Therefore the great King has sent us here to build this fort; he remembers his children; he knows that they have enemies; he puts forth his strong arm to protect them; he will make our deeds the pledge of his friendship. Like you, we are his children, and obey his voice; he commands us to stand firm, joining hands with you. So the power of the French shall wane, and your enemies shall perish, and the land shall have peace. Let us therefore solemnly renew this Covenant; then go your ways homewards, resting assured that the sun will shine forth again, and all clouds vanish quickly away."

Now the quiet dignity of this short speech was the result of the most strenuous efforts on the part of his brother-officers, who had tardily persuaded the Commandant of the impolicy of any passionate outburst; but evidently he had great difficulty in controlling his temper and schooling himself in civility towards

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the chiefs. This became more and more apparent in the conversation which followed, as the point at issue developed itself. The Indians were no less determined about our retiring from the fort than we were resolute to stay; and all the tact in the world seemed unlikely to prevent the conclave ending in an open breach. But our Commandant was not a man to beat about the bush or butter his words long, and the red warriors matched him in their fiery tones and impatient gestures. At last the excitement grew to a head when the Chief who was holding the Covenant Chain stepped forward, and flung it on the ground at the Commandant's feet, exclaiming:—

"Behold the links are riven—the Covenant is broken! Since the great King hearkens not, we are his children no longer; we will be his enemies, we will war against him, aye, even as long as the Sun and the Moon shall endure."

The others instantly shouted assent, and then abruptly turned away and strode towards the gates, followed by a volley of oaths from the Commandant to the effect that they might do their worst, but nothing should stir him from the fort, not all the natives on the Continent and the French into the bargain, if they tried till the crack of doom.

Orders were given to close the gates at once, and that evening every one felt the suspense which forebodes a storm gathering whereof none can calculate the violence or predict the issue.

Next day we had time to survey our position. Not an Indian was to be seen, but we knew they must be lurking near, and that a siege was imminent. Our force was sufficient, aided by the defences, to ward off a direct attack, and a large supply of provisions had been stored in view of a portion of the troops wintering in the fort. Access to the water was also secure, and large cisterns of bark had been erected close to the houses for additional convenience. But now that it was impossible for the main body to return to the city in the autumn, the rations would clearly fail to support so large a garrison throughout the winter, and thus our very strength was at the same time a source of fatal weakness.

We knew the stubbornness of the Indians too well to think they would ever grow tired of besieging us, and allow a safe retreat. But even supposing that were so, how could we hope to find the way unguided through deep snow to the river? how descend it without Batteaux? Worst of all was our inability to send word of affairs to the city. It was a forlorn hope to call for volunteers to run the gauntlet, but two men who offered them-

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selves were promptly despatched. Poor fellows! We learnt afterwards that they were scalped only one day out from camp. No messenger could hope to evade the keen watch of the Indian scouts without a far more perfect knowledge of the country than any one in camp possessed; in short, starvation must soon stare us in the face, however successfully we might repel the fury of our enemies.

But no one seemed inclined to give in without a struggle; there were still several things wanting towards the completion of our defences, notably the clearing a wider space between the fort and the forest, so that the enemy might have no shelter from our fire. This work was immediately set about with vigour, and, strange to say, continued day by day without interruption; immunity from attack gradually restored confidence, and at length begat recklessness, and doubt as to the reality of peril. Soldiers began to venture further from the fort, and to leave their arms, neglecting such tiresome precautions as unnecessary. But our illusion was soon dispelled. One day when a party was out wood-cutting, we were startled by hearing shots in the distance; instantly there was a call to arms, and a strong relief prepared to advance into the forest; but no sooner had they sallied from the stockade than they were themselves assailed by a heavy fire from the line of trees, compelling them to retire from the unseen foe, and not a man of the five wood-cutters ever returned into camp.

From that day the siege began in earnest; there was no means of ascertaining the exact number of the enemy, who kept within the shelter of the forest, and never attacked us in the day-time, but harassed us continually with night assaults, demanding an intensity of vigilance on our part more irksome than the actual fighting.

The bastions proved invaluable, by enabling us to concentrate fire upon any threatened spot; and so good a watch was kept, that although the Indians often crept close up to the palisades unnoticed, they were always discovered and driven back before they had time to demolish or surmount the formidable wood-work. They tried indeed every variety of assault, sometimes upon several parts of the line simultaneously, sometimes uniting their efforts against what they imagined a weak spot; they were not less active on the river side, and from their canoes nearly effected a breach one night in the stake fence projecting into the river, till then unguarded as less liable to attack. They

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also attempted to set fire to the palisade; but fortune favoured us in frustrating their design, and next day our men brought into camp all the faggots they had heaped against the fence before they were driven back.

After a month of almost incessant night attacks, their ardour seemed suddenly to cool, and they evidently determined upon the slower and surer method of starving us out.

We would fain have hoped they were weary of the enterprise and had disappeared; but a *sortie* from the camp was fired upon immediately, proving how closely we were invested.

It was not till then that the Agent allowed a rumour of coming relief to leak out, and hinted at the fidelity of the Indian whose disappearance had been branded for treachery. The idea was eagerly caught up and exaggerated into an assured certainty of rescue quite unwarrantable; for, granted our messenger's safe arrival in the city, it was doubtful whether an immediate relief would be organized, as the despatch only mentioned a probable rupture which had not then occurred; and if the Indians guarded their rear as vigilantly as they watched us, it would be heavy odds against even a strong force cutting its way successfully into camp. But these considerations were for a time lost sight of in the all-absorbing joy at the faintest prospect of escape. Gradually, however, they forced themselves upon us, as week after week passed without a sign of rescue, and the weather grew colder, and we saw the store of provisions and ammunition diminishing steadily.

Truly "hope deferred maketh the heart sick!" The soldiers fell once more into a state of sullen despair which began to assume the fatal form of neglect of discipline and duty in spite of all the efforts of the officers to revive their spirits: all seemed to have utterly lost heart, and I believe, if the Indians had resumed the offensive, it would have fared ill with a garrison so unnerved.

Suddenly one morning—it was a Sunday, I remember—our ears were saluted by a sharp fusillade in the forest. It acted like magic; here was the rescue at last; no laggards this time when the bugle sounded; men flew to their posts with an alacrity the very reverse of their usual sloth. Hastily a council of officers was held. Was this only a ruse of the enemy to entice us from the fort, or a collision with the relieving force so long expected? If the latter, much aid might be given by a *sortie*, which was finally resolved upon. Events justified the risk. The Indians,

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not having the faintest suspicion of attack, were surrounded while completely off their guard, and numbers shot down before they had time to defend themselves. Flying panic-stricken towards the river they were met by the party from the fort, and suffered heavily before they broke past, and eluded pursuit in the thick forest.

Then rang out cheer after cheer as the rescuers met our soldiers and marched triumphantly into camp; they had come none too soon, for in a few weeks famine would have overtaken us, if our supineness did not sooner result in the fort being stormed. It appeared that our faithful Indian had shown incredible speed in reaching the city, and the Agent's well-known skill in dealing with the savages had procured such implicit reliance on his judgment as to the turn matters would take, that an expedition was at once despatched to our aid, guided by men who knew every inch of the country. How they hastened to relieve us—how in spite of all obstacles they pressed on—how their constant vigilance and precautions against ambuscades were rewarded by the complete surprise and rout of the Indians, we soon learned, and I fear we recked too little of the loss of some brave lives in exultation at delivery from our enemies. Fortunately the influence of panic had greatly weakened resistance, so that the sacrifice was small; but three fine fellows had been shot dead, and one of the officers wounded. I had not seen him brought into camp, but in the evening my father came to me and asked if I would help nurse Captain M——, whose wound, though not dangerous, was of such a nature as would compel him to lie quiet for some time, and render him dependent upon the services of other people. "A woman's hands," said my father, "are better than a man's at this work, and you would like to feel yourself really useful."

I had been too long inured now to the company of men to hesitate, and professed my readiness to enter at once upon my duties. So my father took me to the log house which was to serve as hospital, and opened the door, saying as we entered:— "Captain M——, here is my daughter, who will give you the best attention in her power: I think you will fare better from her than from such rough nurses as the gentlest soldier must be.

"I am deeply indebted to Miss MacAdam," replied a voice from the couch at the further end of the room, "and will endeavour to prove a creditable patient."

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The light was dim after the glare outside, but in a moment I recognized the voice. I looked, and there, pale and tired with pain, but handsome as ever, was the face that I had never forgotten, the man who had saved me, saved us all from outrage and insult on the night of the illuminations in the city. How proud I felt at the prospect of repaying the debt we owed him; how I would speed his recovery if good will and care could hasten it!

There was not really much for me to do, just the few things that a man wants when his right arm is helpless, and movement is painful; indeed, my chief difficulty was to persuade him to lie still; he was always jumping up in spite of the pain, to spare me a long reach or a walk across the room, and as he got better, I think he was more nurse than patient. Fast friends we soon became. His life had been full of adventure, and I was a good listener: many a talk too we had about bonny Scotland, for he knew our old home, and the story of our flight. He must have wondered at my eagerness in pestering him with questions, but here was a chance of learning things my father could never be induced to tell, and I could not resist it, treasuring up every scrap of gossip and romance that gave me any tidings of bygone days.

The weeks passed with lightning speed, atoning for the dismal dulness of the siege. Captain M——'s wound healed rapidly; almost too fast, cried my selfishness, in dismay at the approaching loss of my "patient"! But the separation came even sooner than I expected; for there being no probability of any renewed attack beyond the power of the garrison to withstand, the troops of our original company were to return to the city, leaving the rescue party to hold the fort through the winter. With them my father must go; but Captain M——, though pressed for his wound's sake to do likewise, vowed he was quite recovered, would not desert his regiment, and would spend the winter in camp with them. And so for the second time we parted.

The journey was taken none too soon, for snow fell slightly during the march, and the frost was already severe: had we remained a fortnight longer we should have been buried in the drifts. The soldiers were in such good spirits, and so eager to get home, that favoured by the river current, as yet fortunately unimpeded by ice, the distance to the city was traversed in little more than half the time of our upward course, without accident or danger. But the remembrance of the siege and our savage enemies haunted me like a nightmare, and terror of a surprise

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kept us in constant alarms until we made the broad stream of Hudson.

There was no mistaking the cheers which burst forth at sight of the city, telling how intense had been the strain upon mind and body during a long period of hardships and privations, counterbalanced by very small doses of military glory. The citizens certainly treated us like heroes, and feasted the soldiers to their hearts' content. It was pleasant to have so warm a welcome, but I confess I longed for rest, and was not sorry when the nine days' wonder came to an end and our adventures were forgotten, and myself left in peace.

My father would not return to Tuthill's Farm, for what reason I know not, so we lodged in the city with Mr. Edmiston. At first I loathed entering the house ; every room seemed to conjure up the vision of that dreadful night, and with the vision the face of brave Captain M——, pale and ghastly as I had first seen him at Fort Seneca. But habit soon rid my brain of such fancies, of all but the face which still haunted me everywhere in spite of myself, forcing back my thoughts upon every trivial circumstance, every look, every word that fell from his lips in those happy days after the siege. I never lost sight of that face ; after a while it ceased to frighten me, and appeared as a friend and protector, a guardian watching over the household to shield us from evil. Alas ! no, it was not potent enough for that. The stress of his exertions and anxiety at Fort Seneca had told severely upon my father's health ; I had noticed since our return, a waning of vigour, a loss of interest in affairs, which grieved me deeply, for he had reached an age when men's strength, once failing them, seldom returns in full measure, and I feared weakness would grow upon him with increasing years.

But suddenly, without a note of warning, the blow fell. He was struck down by illness ; the wasted frame possessed little power to rally, and I, stunned and shivering with anguish, had to witness the struggle between life and death lingering on week after week, while the hand of the destroyer was slowly gaining the victory.

Throughout his illness my father took much comfort from the ministration of Dr. Ogilvie, one of Mr. Edmiston's friends, who was a frequent visitor at the house, and well-known and respected in the city as the Rector of Trinity Church. A burly figure, a face sometimes radiant with a smile so easy and genial as to contrast sharply with the keen eyes and powerful close-set

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mouth that betokened untiring energy and resolute will; a simple-minded man whose natural large-heartedness was constantly in rebellion against the intolerant spirit fostered by his narrow views of religion; a man who must either be loved or hated; a staunch friend in trouble, of widest sympathies, and intense, ready self-sacrifice, but animated by relentless enmity against heresy and vice. He found in my father a fibre like his own. Both men were brave as lions; both had been tried in the fire of adversity, and not been found wanting; in both a character truly noble was shaded by a tinge of violence and bigotry, darkening on rare occasions into passionate outbursts, succeeded by bitter humiliation and self-reproach.

During my father's illness Dr. Ogilvie entirely devoted himself to us; he never let a day pass without visiting us, and his presence always seemed to bring sunshine into the room, inspiring us with fresh strength to bear our sorrows bravely.

Ah me! If human care and human love availed aught, health must surely have returned; but God willed it otherwise, in His own good time setting the sufferer free, giving peace to the weary frame, and the calm of eternal rest.

I hardly knew what happened afterwards. Good Dr. Ogilvie arranged everything; after the funeral he took me to live in his house, as a member of his own family. I asked no questions, I did not even thank him; for months I went about like one in a dream, seeming not to know or care where I was, mourning for the dead. But the burden of sorrow, however cruel and crushing at first, mercifully weighs lightest on the young, and so, little by little, as I regained strength, the keen edge of grief wore off, the past slowly faded, I began to live in the present once more.

There was plenty to do at Dr. Ogilvie's; from his eldest son of sixteen years downwards not a single member of his family was allowed to be idle. The house stood outside the city, in a large garden which gave full employment for all; no hired labour was procured or indeed obtainable, but there was not a more productive or better cultivated spot in the neighbourhood. It was almost a farm, with its cows, pigs, and poultry, and I soon proved the value of my experience at Tuthills. Entering heart and soul into this busy life, I began to win golden opinions from the Doctor, and found at the same time the best antidote for grief, while my pride was satisfied with the thought that I was able to do something towards repaying the generosity which had given me a home in need.

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IV.

Captain M——'s image had been completely banished from my brain by the illness of my dear father, and long after his death I was so absorbed with grief that no room was left for any other emotion. But with returning health, back flew my thoughts to Fort Seneca, conjuring up once again the vision I welcomed as an old friend. Now, too, a shapeless hope took possession of me, that ere long he would come, and that somehow his coming would bring happiness. I could not explain this feeling; it was part of the mystery of the vision; but very real it was, and stronger it grew daily. I eagerly hailed every scrap of news from the fort. There had been no fresh attack by the Indians, who seemed to have become reconciled to the presence of the garrison, and were trading freely with the Agents; we had perhaps been wrong in supposing the hostility of the tribes to be general rather than due to local irritation, which had ceased with the practical extermination of the aggrieved party. Anyhow the safety of the troops was no longer imperilled, an announcement that marvellously soothed my anxiety. At length the season for sending up reliefs came round; he would soon be on his way; now he must be nearing the city; any day he might arrive. But what then? Why should he remember me? Or, if he had not quite forgotten me, he would have other things to think of, duties to attend to, friends to visit—it might be months before I should see him, nay, the chance might never occur at all. Thus I reasoned inwardly, but yet I think I was always half expectant, and not one bit surprised when he did come, just as I had hoped. The moment he entered the garden I saw him, and stood gazing at him from the window, silently admiring; then a sudden impulse seized me to rush away and hide myself. Here was what I had been longing for day and night, the meeting I had rehearsed a thousand times in fancy; but now my courage failed, shyness or silly timidity made me feel as if I would sooner sink through the earth than encounter him.

But good Dame Ogilvie, brimming over with importance at entertaining an officer of His Majesty's forces, soon discovered my retreat, and compelled me to accompany her into the parlour where he was waiting.

My head was reeling so that I could hardly walk straight into the room. As I entered, he stepped forward quickly to greet me.

"Nurse Mary, have you quite forgotten your patient?"

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"Forgotten him! Good heavens, forgotten him! Every tone of his voice, every line in his features, was as familiar as if we had only parted yesterday! that bright curly hair, those clear blue eyes, the broad shoulders, the deep strong voice, had they not haunted, penetrated, absorbed me for months past? Forgotten him! I laughed aloud, the idea so tickled my fancy. Then we began to talk; soon I was perfectly at ease, conversing as freely and familiarly as ever. I am afraid Dame Ogilvie hardly got her full share of attention; before long she bounced out of the room, leaving us alone—much to my relief, for I wanted to have him all to himself. Yet a strange constraint thereupon ensued; my tongue almost refused to answer his showers of questions, about our journey from Fort Seneca, my father's illness, Dr. Ogilvie, the new home I had found, everything that had happened since he had seen me last. Worst of all was the sense of how ungrateful he must think me, for, in spite of an intense craving to open all my heart to him, the words stuck in my throat, and I behaved just like any awkward, silly girl being catechised by a stranger. What a long half hour before Dame Ogilvie returned, and he rose to take leave! he would come again, he said, when the Doctor, whose acquaintance he looked forward to making, was at home. I ran upstairs to watch till he was out of sight, straining my eyes after him down the road to the city, impatient of every tree or fence that hid him from view for a moment. Even when he disappeared in the distance, I could scarcely tear myself away from the window. My ordinary occupations palled terribly; work became drudgery, and all I could think of was the time that must pass before his coming again. The interval was not really long—only two days; but I took count in hours! He saw the Doctor that second visit, and told me he had never liked "a parson" so well. I found out afterwards that their conversation had turned on my future. Captain M——, God bless him!—had offered a share of his pay for my support, but the Doctor had stoutly refused, and then arose a contest of generosity between the two, which ended in mutual esteem, though the matter was left as it had been at first.

Captain M—— lost no opportunity of cementing their friendship. It was easy enough to gain the Doctor's good opinion, to keep it was more difficult; he credited every one with a high standard like his own, until disproved by experience; but the standard was too high for most men, and his faith in them once shaken could not be restored.

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Looking back upon events, I freely pardon Dr. Ogilvie. I admit his staunch virtue, his blameless life; I grant the generous nature that wished to judge other men by himself; I can understand his disgust at finding how few stood the test; and, knowing the earnestness with which he strove after goodness, I see how he must have abhorred moral levity. So I do not wonder that he soon became shocked at M——, who was no better than his comrades, adhering strictly indeed to their own code of honour, but taking good care that none of the pastimes of gentlemen of fashion were condemned by it. But the rest of the family had no such excuse; they were good, worthy creatures, utterly ignorant of the world, and could only have seen in M—— a brave, handsome officer, who always treated them with perfect courtesy. Yet they hated him; they never dared be uncivil in his presence, but I had to listen to their miserable jeers and insults day after day. What matter to them if I *was* madly in love with him? If he did come to visit us very often, did his visits hurt them? It may be I did sometimes forget my work for thinking of him, or leave a task unfinished to join him, but what of that? What cause had they to complain, who never gave me a helping hand or lightened the least of my duties? Ah, well! I suppose they grudged me his affection, but even that they need not, for I am sure it could never have been theirs.

I was always uncertain as to when I fell in love; I liked to imagine that the spark was kindled when he rescued me from the mob on the bonfire-night; that it had been fanned while I was nursing him at Fort Seneca; but at all events it now burst into a flame so fierce and flagrant, that any single word against him sufficed to rouse me to a pitch of fury whereof I was never capable before. His visits were all I cared for; almost every day he came, feigning some excuse or other; he did not leave me long in doubt; he gave me love as fervent as my own. Oh, the joy of that heavenly secret whispered between man and maid! It was a thousand times worth the delay, the trials, the insults—that treasure beyond all price, the knowledge of love.

We began to plan out the future. Dick's pay—we were Dick and Mary now—was a mere pittance, but he had received large grants of land in Newfoundland for his bravery in the wars; settlers were arriving rapidly; he would soon sell enough to enable him to marry, and in time we should be quite rich. Dr. Ogilvie must not learn our secret yet—not until we could fix the wedding-day; for supposing him to demur—and he was a

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man whose conduct baffled calculation—he might forbid Dick's coming to the house, and condemn us to the unspeakable pangs of separation.

Meanwhile I had a talisman which banished the sting from the taunts and gibes of the family. What cared I now if Dame Ogilvie did scold me for idleness; she would not be troubled with me much longer? And if the girls did sneer at my pining for a sweetheart, had not Dick a right to all my heart? I could see they did not like his visits; but the Doctor was master in his own house, and so long as he said nothing, no one else dared raise a finger in the matter. Nevertheless, I was not quite easy in my mind, for I began to notice a certain coolness in Dr. Ogilvie's manner towards me, which I imagined must be caused by his either having discovered my secret, or regarding Dick's presence at the house with disfavour. My suspicions were soon confirmed. Calling me into the garden one day, he told me that as he was coming home from the city, he had just met Captain M—— outside the gate; that he had observed a certain degree of familiarity between us which could not be permitted. Officers in H.M.'s Service were not the right companions for young girls, and though I might not think so, he was giving me the best advice in warning me against what might easily prove a dangerous acquaintance. The abruptness of these remarks so overwhelmed me that I could find no words to answer; I ran to my room in a rage, furious with Dr. Ogilvie, and furious with myself for remaining silent. What right had he to speak ill of Dick? To know him was an honour for the family, and to me his love was life! Was it the Doctor's business to choose for me? he had no claim, no authority over my actions. Whatever might come of it,—trouble, danger, aye death itself—no power in this world or fear of the next should persuade or force me to forsake my love. Thus I raved on, until at last I cried myself tired to sleep. Next day I was calmer, but still set on disobeying advice which I knew to be meant for a command. Dick came that afternoon as usual, and out of sheer defiance, I purposely welcomed him with more warmth than usual. I paraded my intimacy before all the family, goaded by excitement into a display of reckless gaiety I was far from feeling; but the moment we were left alone it collapsed utterly, and I sank sobbing and shivering into his strong arms.

It soothed me to tell him everything; the insults I had long

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borne, the Doctor's tardy apprehension, and warning against the man I loved, my resolution never to give him up, and my despair at the mere thought of separation. He had been listening silently till I spoke of parting.

"No," he cried, "by God, Mary, there shall be no parting! Mine you are, and mine you shall be, if I have to pull the house down about the parson's ears to win you!"

I liked that blunt speech which gave me the courage I wanted, and confidence to sustain the part I had chosen. We decided that until Dick was himself taxed, he should continue as if nothing had happened, and I was to meet him in defiance of the warning I had received. Perhaps the storm would blow over, but in any case we should have time to consult, if fresh threats were uttered, before they could be carried into execution.

I tried to feel brave, but my courage oozed and sank under Dame Ogilvie's cross looks at the supper-table that evening. Now that the Doctor had declared himself against Dick, the abuse of him became open and general in the household. But I think this pained me less than the covert backbiting, for my temper once fairly roused, I nailed my courage to the mast and found a malicious satisfaction in wagging as sharp a tongue as any of them. Still I was intensely miserable. Oh, why would not Dick take me away! How long must I be condemned to wait for relief from this hateful life?

Weeks passed, during which I saw him constantly—the one bright ray in my gloom—and not another word of remonstrance was uttered. But the storm was not blown over; it was gathering day by day, and I felt the crash must soon come. Dick was almost persuaded to wait no longer for the sale of his lands, about which he appeared to have been over-sanguine, and we were considering how we two could both live on his pay, barely sufficient though it was for himself alone. He would write to his brother in England who had helped him before, and might be induced to advance money or make him an allowance upon the security of the lands until they could be sold. Many were the plans we made, I assenting eagerly to the wildest scheme which promised deliverance from my prison-house. Indeed I think we should not much longer have delayed taking the final step; but events moved quicker than our plans, and when the storm broke it found us still unprepared. I was seated one evening at supper with the rest, when I heard my name gravely called by the Doctor:—

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"Mary McAdam," he said—I knew what was coming—"your good father on his death-bed almost with his last words solemnly entrusted me with your welfare. I accepted the charge; God knows I tried to fulfil it faithfully! I brought you here, and made you one of my own family, to live as we live, to share, as I hoped, in our happiness. At first God's blessing seemed to rest upon us; His hand gently soothed your sorrow, and I thought that you would soon regain comfort and contentment. But since Captain M——'s return to Fort Seneca, I have been grieved to witness the change. You have become idle, wilful and sullen; you have neglected your duties, quarrelled with my children, openly disregarded the warning I gave you. I do not blame you alone for this. Captain M——, if he were a man of honour, would not have set himself to win a silly girl's heart when no good could come of it. But I know these fine soldiers; they are here to-day, gone to-morrow; they make love in every town where they are quartered, and exult over broken hearts like savages counting their scalps. You are young, Mary, and a handsome face bewitches you; I am old, and look for an honest man. I cannot forget your dead father's charge, and I will still do my utmost to save you. Since warning has no weight, I now forbid you, so long as you remain under my roof, to see or speak to Captain M——; henceforward you must choose for yourself between a home and a lover."

"The choice is soon made," I cried, starting up in a passion. "Do you think I will stay another moment in your house to be insulted like this? I am not your slave; my father sought a home for me here, not a prison. What right have you to speak ill of Dick, my friend—aye, if you prefer it, my lover? Did he not save my life? Have I not nursed him in sickness? Would I not die for him, if need were, so brave he is, so good, so true? You dare not speak to his face the words you uttered just now! I suppose you think it is safe to dishonour him before me, whose sharpest weapon is my tongue? In his name, then, I say it is a lie—a foul black lie you have uttered! Whose love has he forsaken? Whose heart has he broken? I know one that he has bound up, one he is true and loyal to, and I go to prove it. Farewell, Doctor Ogilvie; my choice is made. I go to—my lover."

Dead silence followed. Ere they had time to recover, I flung myself out of the room. Quickly I must act—quickly, before my passion cooled; away into the city to Dick's quarters, to throw myself into his arms, for the shelter denied me here. And then?

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Ah! no matter what happened then; with Dick, come what might, I should be safe. Gathering up a few things, I stepped out into the night; so black, so cold it was, a shiver ran through me. Had I counted the risk? Too late to think of that now; on bravely to my darling! Half-running, half-walking, I sped along; I knew the way well, but at night it seemed strange. I was startled by every tree looming by the roadside, every sound that broke the stillness. It was full two miles into the city—enough to tire me out, wearied already with excitement, enough to turn my thoughts wistfully homewards, whither there was no returning. In the city the lights, the crowd hurrying to and fro, frightened me yet more than the silence and gloom outside. I knew not where Dick lodged; I must go to the barracks where there was a guard stationed, and ask. Wrapping my cloak closer round me, I hurried on in terror of missing my way or being accosted by some of the rough fellows who hung about the streets near the wine-shops. At length I reached the barracks. There was the sentry, slowly pacing up and down, just as I used to see him when we lived in the city. He paid no heed to me, I spoke so gently, afraid of even the sound of my own voice. I confronted him on his beat. Did he know where Captain M—— lived? Yes, thank Heaven! The house was close at hand, was visible from where we stood, so there was no mistaking it. The door was opened by an elderly woman, holding a light, cross at the disturbance.

"Is Captain M—— here?" I asked.

"What business is that of the likes of you?" was the reply, as she stepped back, intending to shut the door in my face.

That was too much. My temper rose in an instant, and I sprang forward into the house before she could act.

"Tell your master that Miss McAdam would speak with him," I said, summoning all my courage.

Something in my tone seemed to subdue her, for she made no rejoinder, but speedily retired, leaving me in darkness. This last effort quite overcame me; I sank senseless on to a bench. But soon I perceived some one standing over me, felt myself lifted up, the strong arms round me, and the voice I loved calling, 'Mary! Mary!"

Dreamily I opened my eyes.

"What has happened, darling?" he said.

When he had heard my story—"You won't send me back, Dick, will you?" I asked.

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"Never, darling, never!" he answered, giving me a sense of security I had not felt before. I knew what he would say, but could not rest until I heard the promise spoken. Dick vowed we should be married the next day; but I had still such a terror of Doctor Ogilvie, and fear of what might happen if he discovered me, that nothing would induce me to go to church. I know now that my fear was folly, and that he had no power at all over my actions; but I suppose the habit of obeying him was so strong, as to make me imagine all sorts of penalties for my flight if he could lay hands on me. Besides, a marriage without banns was open to be questioned, adding the risk of unlawfulness to that of discovery. Had we not already bound ourselves together by vows most sacred and by a love stronger than any oath? And was not the Church's blessing after all but a form, needless to those who had the substance? Thus, goaded by love and fear, I allowed myself, nay forced myself to take that fatal, irrevocable step which for years afterwards bore bitter fruits of misery and useless penitence. Dick was not to blame; it was I who sinned —I who rightly bore the penalty. It was not he who then refused to wed me; therefore the guilt is mine, and mine alone.

We took a cottage over the water in West Chester County; there I lived, and there you, my boys, were born. There, by years of suffering and shame, I atoned for my mad wickedness, passing under a feigned name, cut off from all my old acquaintance, suspected, shunned by the neighbours, abandoned to solitude often for weeks together, and passionately longing as time went on for those marriage vows once blindly spurned. I was yet too proud to own my penitence or crave as a favour what I had already refused as my right. Ah! that living in sin! How hideous a mockery of the happy future I had pictured! Love is mighty indeed, and on the full flood of passion rides triumphant; but when the tide ebbs, when the blood cools from fever-heat, woe, woe to man and maid who have failed to weld their love in sacred fetters, or thought to match the strength of their puny passions with the inexorable sanction of God's Holy Law! Ah! believe me, love is mighty, but it is not proof against the curse of sin.

Our love was true; but a curse lay upon it, turning happiness to gall, raising a phantom of bliss we blindly groped after yet never grasped; hurling a stab with every kiss, strangling me in an embrace of agony. When Dick was absent, I fell into a dull apathy of despair, careless even of my children: how could I take pride in them, how plan their future, whose lives I knew too

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well must be for my sin's sake branded with infamy? Better they should die ere they had felt the shame, aye, better far than live and curse their mother. Yet still I loved them, loved their innocence, lived in their love for me. Surely the good God would not visit upon them my guilt! Often I resolved to speak to Dick once more of marriage, but as often failed, each effort growing weaker. Not a word had escaped his lips about it since that first night in the city. It was common enough among the officers at that time to live as we did, and considered no disgrace. I had been offered marriage and had refused; Dick had eased his conscience and was content to do like the rest. I cannot upbraid him, he was faithful and true to me through all. The sin was my own; mine too, thank God! the misery and shame.

Years passed; each day seemed a month, each month but a day; so drags out a life of sorrow, where every hour is weary, but none more than other. I never lost my fear of discovery, though all search, if ever made, must long ago have ceased. I was cut off as one dead from name, and home, and friends, and at length it seemed as if I was to lose even him for whose sake I had given up the rest.

He was taken ill in the autumn with terrible fits of sickness and the ague. A doctor said recovery was hopeless if he tried to stay in New York through the winter; we found an old neighbour to take care of the children, and I went with him by sea to Charleston, and by the aid of Providence I nursed him back to health. All the while I was ill myself, for little Peter was born on the voyage South, and it was hard work for me. Yet I think I was happier then than for many a long day past; joy at the release from the city—joy at being constantly with Dick and able to minister to him—joy at his gratitude, joy at his recovery, oh! there was a new life thrilling through me, inspiring hope, and love, and strength. But his health again gave way on our return to the city in the spring. We had a rough voyage up the coast, causing him much suffering, and reducing his power to fight the disease which was fastening upon him. For a time he resisted; but while summer was still at its height, he had to take to his bed. There he lay dying: it was no use to try to hide the truth; I watched him day and night, hardly leaving the bedside for a moment. He was so good and patient, I could feel his eyes ever following me round the room with a placid gaze of satisfied love, as I busied myself about the trifles which become absorbing in illness; but all the time there was a leaden

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weight at my heart, mocking my efforts at cheerfulness, loading me with a burden harder to bear than mere pain.

This man I loved so, this dying man, was not my husband. The hope had never deserted me, flimsy though it was, that some day the cruel barrier of sin would be shattered, and our union be blessed with the Church's sanction; but now that hope seemed lost for ever, and a future, black with despair, loomed nearer and nearer.

We had no friends among the neighbours, and rest became a thing unknown to me: even the few moments I spared from watching my darling were tormented by the appalling vision of my own wretchedness. As he grew weaker the horizon darkened; the old doctor, after his visit one morning, said he could do nothing more: I must only wait and watch. I knew what he meant, the blow was coming soon. Terrified and dazed, as though it had fallen already, I knelt in an agony of prayer, of aimless, frantic, supplication to God to save.

A knock at the door roused me from reverie, nay, startled me at so unexpected an occurrence. I stepped cautiously to open it, and found myself face to face with—Dr. Ogilvie! At the sight of him, my old irrational terror which had latterly subsided, again surged up. I stood there longing to double-lock the door against him, but forced to be still and listen to him.

"Mary," he said, "stay: I come to you as a friend, if you will let me. Only yesterday I heard of this grief of yours. I have come to offer you such aid as I can give. Ah! Mary! you do not know how my heart has ached for you! How I have thought of you, prayed for you, watched over you! When you left us, I made no search for you, God forgive me if I was wrong! You had gone to the man of your choice, regardless of counsel and command; it was too late for my entreaties to prevail, and I was powerless to compel your return. So I resolved to watch, for I could not utterly cast you off. So long as Captain M—— remained in the city, your bodily comfort would be safe, though repentance long and bitter awaited your sinful soul. I heard of his first illness, and restoration to health, and then no more, until yesterday they told me he was lying here at death's door, you nursing him. Then, Mary, I could restrain myself no longer. You must not be friendless, while I could help, or in need which I could avert. What can I do? Let the past be forgotten between us, all but that I was your father's friend. I would still be yours, and for your sake your husband's,"

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"Ah! but you do not know; he is not my husband—would to God he were!"

He had touched the keynote which disarmed all my resentment; there was no room for that in the flood of sorrow.

"Child," said he, solemnly and gently, "I dreamed not of this; yet take me to him."

The influence to obey once more seemed natural. I led the way to the chamber where Dick lay, as it chanced, asleep. Dr. Ogilvie stood by the bed-side.

"I will watch for his waking," he said, "then I will call you. Leave us now and rest yourself."

Weary and weak, I made no resistance, but flung myself on my couch and slumbered heavily for hours. Returning, I found Dick talking quietly to the doctor, who silently took his leave, saying we should see him again the next day.

"Yes," said Dick, as soon as he was gone, "to-morrow he will come back, and then, Mary, he will marry us."

What!—did I hear aright? Marry us? Was it true, or a delusion born in my whirling brain? But Dick beckoned me close to him, and told me how when he woke and perceived Dr. Ogilvie sitting there, a sudden longing desire had seized him not to die unwedded; he seemed to recognize the hand of Providence in bringing a minister of the Church to our door. The good man had hesitated, but at length yielded, influenced more by regard for my future than Dick's importunity; he had offered to dispense with the banns, to procure the King's licence, and come himself to read the service at the bedside. "So that whatever happens to me, Mary," he went on gravely, "you and the children shall face the world with a good name."

But my mind was too full of joy to contemplate so sad a thought; he would, he must recover, and we should enter upon a new life of happiness, bright as the sunshine, never to be clouded.

Alas! how short-lived were my hopes! he rallied by the contagion of my cheerfulness that evening, but the next day was worse, hardly strong enough to utter the few words of those solemn vows we plighted ere it was too late. A few hours afterwards death took him. . . . .

Children, judge him not, but rather thank him that he did not allow the grave to close upon a sin to which I, your mother, had tempted.

THE END.

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TO THE RESCUE.

OF the many houses where I have dined, Mr. and Mrs. X——'s is undoubtedly my favourite. When I think of the evenings I have spent there, I experience a sensation as nearly resembling gratitude as any a Londoner can hope to attain to. Their small dinners are always the best, of course; but even the others have been invariably more than endurable; and where, in their circle, or similar ones, could higher praise than that be awarded? Chief, perhaps, among the merits of the entertainment is the absence of that feeling of oppressiveness, of that sense of the utter impossibility of ever rivalling the gorgeousness and perfection of the whole thing, which so often sends one away in a state of pained resignation to one's own insignificance. Walking home by the Park side, in the congenial company of the midnight cigar, from one of Mr. and Mrs. X——'s little dinners, I have sometimes said to myself, "Upon my word, I think *I* could give a little thing like that." An inherited want of pluck has always restrained me from the attempt to give effect to this rash resolution; moreover, calmer reflection has since assured me that in these entertainments there is some subtle and delicate art which places them still farther beyond my reach than even the more pretentious ones to which I have alluded.

The evening of which I am about to speak, however, was, or came near to being, an exception. How the misfortune arose I have never known. To find, when I reached the house, that the affair was on the larger scale was a disappointment; to discover, at a glance, that I was acquainted with fewer members of the company than usual, was another; and when I saw in Mrs. X——'s eyes, as she greeted me, what I had never seen before, an indication of her being ever so little ill at ease, my spirits sank sensibly. One of the great attractions of Mrs. X——'s dinners had always been her remarkable aptitude for divining one's preference in respect to the lady who should have the power of making one happy or miserable during the two hours

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or more to be spent at the dinner-table. How little do hostesses, as a rule, reflect on the awful nature of these temporary unions, inexorable, not to be severed! They resemble an unmentionable and somewhat problematic place in the fact that out of them there is no redemption. What tremendous power, as of life and death—for two hours—to be centred in one small, weak, possibly silly, woman! But Mrs. X—— rose to a fine sense of her responsibilities, and rarely gave one even slight cause to complain. How often has the selection my roving eye had made during the *mauvais quart d'heure* been fulfilled in the event! How often, again, when that selection was annulled, have I had reason to thank her, and to admit that she had probably been wiser for me than I could have been for myself! Nor was I an exceptional object of her solicitude in this regard. It was the common experience of her guests; it seemed to each as though his —and I think I may also say her—predilections had alone been considered. And when, on this occasion, I found myself in the most unusual case of being ill-companioned, my spirits, already a little dashed, went down to zero; it appeared to me to be an omen of dire disaster; even my appetite seemed to flee, and my mind was filled with the dim presage of some unknown calamity.

One ray of consolation, albeit a melancholy one, there was. In a little time I found that I was apparently not expected, certainly not encouraged, to make myself particularly entertaining or agreeable. My chain, though it galled, was at least a light one; I could drag it about, and, to that extent, was free. With a mental ejaculation of thankfulness to my captor for this small mercy, I proceeded to make full use of my modified liberty. I went in search of that crumpled rose-leaf, the existence of which was to me a matter of absolute certainty. First I explored the many known faces at the table. There they were, old and tried comrades, brothers and sisters in arms; many a knife and fork had we brandished side by side; and in none of their faces could I now read the danger signal. X—— himself seemed the same as ever; but in his wife's face, and through her smiles, I could still see the same watchful, anxious expression that had surprised me on entering. With a sigh, as I thought of the hopeless nature of the quest, I set out for the strange regions.

"I shall be away some time," I thought; "let me make one farewell remark to the lady who for the present has dominion over my being."

The harmless courtesies were exchanged, and I started. The

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new faces stood out like unknown islands that had suddenly sprung up in familiar waters. One rapid survey first, the only result of which was that I had counted them. Eight in all; five women, including my liege lady, and three men. Now to classify them; two young men, ordinary, to all appearance; one elderly, military; typical, safe. "Can it be a lady?" I thought; "then indeed my chances of making a discovery are slender." I know that charming sex well enough to have abandoned the idea that I can make a good first-sight diagnosis of any member of it. My eyes rested on one of them after the other, in a manner quite aimless and futile. After the expenditure of full three minutes, I was still unenlightened. Back I came to my duty, dropped a conversational pearl, received another in exchange, and was off again. Like the children, both of a smaller and a larger growth, I said: "I will take the easiest thing first. I will exhaust the possibilities of the male unknowns." Here at least I was in a field of research for which Providence has not altogether denied me the capabilities.

The next remark made to me by my fair neighbour received the quite irrelevant answer: "Yes. I have found him." My apology was received with perfect calmness and good humour; the little incident helped, in fact, to break down the barrier that had stood between us. We conversed somewhat more freely; but hardly for a moment did I remove my eyes from the object of intense interest they had discovered. A young man, of not more than thirty, almost opposite to me, was conversing in a low voice and rapidly with a girl, also one of the unknowns. He would have been handsome, but for a certain expression in his face that made one say, in the first place, "Weakness." On looking again and again, and more and more keenly, I mentally added, "Dissipation." The contrast between the upper and lower portions of his face was very marked, the mouth and chin expressing irresolution and self-indulgence with fatal clearness, while the forehead and eyes maintained a calm, almost haughty, nobility. It was as though one saw the high-water mark of the muddy waves of life on what must have been at one time an unsullied and almost perfect face; and the question, "When, where, and how did he begin to cease to be a gentleman?" irresistibly assailed my mind. But when he laughed, his whole face seemed to share what I cannot but call the degradation of the lower part; and he laughed frequently. More and more frequently, I remarked, as dinner went on. His conversation, of

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whatever nature it might be, seemed to interest, amuse, and even excite his companion. Of her I could not bring myself to formulate any more definite judgment than was summed up in the one word, "Frivolous." True, she was young, very young; but one somehow felt that the frivolity would remain, when it would be no longer possible to plead the excuse of youth. As I watched them, I seemed, as one sometimes does, without hearing a word to gather vaguely the import of their talk, which was chiefly on his side; her *rôle*, apparently, being, half-shyly, half-maliciously, to encourage him to further sallies. A gradual, but to me at least fearfully distinct, crescendo all at once began to set in, and now I caught a word or two, a phrase or two, here and there. I glanced at my hostess. The shade of anxiety on her face had deepened into alarm. Again I looked at my *vis-à-vis*, and a horrible thought came over me. Certainly, while I had observed him, he had drunk wine in the ordinary way, but I had not thought that he did so too freely; and yet, undoubtedly he was just a little intoxicated. Hastily I looked round the table to see whether any one else appeared to notice it; the conversation had become brisker and more general; my companion was talking to her other neighbour. At this time dessert was about to begin. "We shall get through," I thought; "besides, I have been over-observant of him; I exaggerate; I have worked myself up to an undue pitch of sensitiveness." Again the crescendo, and this time it seemed that he *must* attract attention. No! not yet! I began to catch from his conversation more than detached words and phrases. And now my worst fears were realized. He was speaking in a manner—how shall I describe it?—well, in a manner which, to say the least, would have better befitted the period, a little later, when our sex would be in undisputed possession of the dining-room. Higher and higher his voice rose; the girl's face now expressing sheer fright at the spirit she had helped to evoke. One or two groups near him broke off their conversation in a startled manner. I saw Mr. and Mrs. X—— exchanging mute piteous signals of distress. What was to be done? Without exciting remark, our hostess could not for at least fifteen or twenty minutes give the signal for the ladies to depart. For an instant I caught her eye, and read in it a wild despairing appeal for help. Half a minute more, and the entire situation must have been plain to everybody. The table was already beginning to be stirred with a sense of something unusual. I rapidly breathed what I suppose was a prayer,

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braced myself for an effort, and addressed my *vis-à-vis* in loud firm tones: "Pardon me, sir, but what you say reminds me——"

"I am speaking to this lady, sir,"—his manner was quite courteous—"and really must——"

"If you will kindly allow me," I said, very politely, but with an endeavour to introduce a considerable amount of resolution into my tone; "what you say brings to my mind so vividly an incident that once happened to me, that I cannot refrain from relating it. You will find it worth listening to, I imagine."

Disregarding a movement of impatience on the part of some of the gentlemen, with whose dislike for anecdote I would, under other circumstances, have been in perfect sympathy, I went on:

"Some years ago——"

Here a gesture of despair from all the gentlemen, and a half-suppressed groan from one or two; while, among the ladies, a rustle of pleased anticipation. I proceeded relentlessly:—

"Some years ago, when barely twenty, I was returning from the Cape, whither I had been sent in search of health. We had a pleasant company on board, composed of strangely varied elements, which yet seemed happily chosen for blending into the most perfect harmony and good-fellowship. Among the more noticeable of the passengers was a lady, whose age might have been anything from twenty-two to twenty-seven; intelligent, artistic, handsome; married, but whether wife or widow none of us, I think, knew. In the crowd of gay and good-humoured people who helped to charm away the monotony of the voyage she might well have been awarded the first place; and our pleasant evenings in the saloon were indebted to her for much of their success. If one had to find a fault in her, it would perhaps have been that she was a little too brilliant; bright and sparkling rather than amiable or tender; that her cleverness was a trifle tinged with sarcasm; and that, altogether, one's predominant feeling in regard to her was admiration rather than liking. But it seems ungracious to cavil at the very qualities which made her pre-eminently good company, and so laid us all under a deep obligation. I was at that dreamy age when our powers, or habits, of observation are fitful and erratic; when we fail to notice the nine-and-ninety things that are perfectly obvious, and are keenly alive to the hundredth, which no one would ever have expected us to see. It was my whim to be interested in her; and in the intervals when I was not watching the receding Southern Cross, or wondering how many things there were in heaven and earth

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yet undreamt of in my philosophy, I had the impertinence to speculate about her to a considerable extent. And the first result of my speculation was that I persuaded myself that I detected a forced note in her gaiety. She sang, and sang well; but it was strange how persistently she avoided those tender songs I would have preferred to hear, and gave us, for the most part, songs that mocked at life, or wild gipsy melodies ringing with defiance, and full of passion too fierce to be called by the gentle name of love. The "Habanera" of "Carmen," then comparatively new, was perhaps her favourite; and she certainly sang it in a manner that ought to have been convincing, that would have convinced any but a very young man obstinately bent on maintaining his theory. And my theory, of course, was of a woman bearing about with her a deeply hidden sorrow, a woman of intense tenderness masquerading as heartless, fearful of revealing anything, lest she should reveal too much. I began to court her society, and you may imagine that in the course of many walks on deck I was able to manufacture a good deal of evidence to corroborate my theory."

During all this I could see the face of my friend opposite fixed on mine with painfully strained attention, and an earnest determination not to fail to discover in what the precise appositeness of my story might consist.

"I say that I manufactured evidence, for really there was none. Our conversation was always of the most ordinary character, and, so far as it went, perfectly frank and friendly. I was not in love with her—not in the least; considering the circumstances, and the fact that I was twenty, and she some few years older, I have since regarded it as a most marvellous thing that I was not; but I suppose my intense intellectual interest in her, not to call it by the vulgar name of curiosity, engrossed me completely. Always I was watching for the revelation of her inner, deeper self; and it never came. Once, I remember, we were crossing, as we had often crossed before, a sort of bridge between two decks. Beneath we could see right down into the ship's hold, a depth that seemed at times quite fearful. This evening she paused awhile, looked down, shuddered slightly, and passed on. I always regarded that little action as symbolical of our intercourse. We kept strictly to the level upper walks of the conventionalities and mediocrities. What dreadful cargo she carried, if any, I was never privileged to know. She always seemed to me to—well, to shudder and pass on.

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"Did I say that my theory found absolutely no evidence to support it? I was wrong. There was just one trifle, light as air, if you will. I have said that her songs were of the wild, fierce, defiant, mocking kind. But sometimes in the pauses of our conversation—for we had grown to be on sufficiently good terms to sustain even long pauses without awkwardness—I have heard her gently humming to herself, and fancied, or rather not merely fancied, that I caught the tenderer note; now a bar or two of Beethoven, now a song of Schumann, or a snatch of Elsa's music in 'Lohengrin'; and, more often still, some simple old Scotch melody—'Ye banks and braes,' I *know* I have heard, and 'Auld Robin Gray'——"

Here a lady at the other end of the table suddenly dropped her fruit-knife, with a little exclamation.

"I fear I weary you," I said.

"No, no! Quite the reverse. Go on, *please*"—with much emphasis.

"Well, a couple of nights before we reached Madeira I dreamed of her, a dream that I know was vivid at the time, yet in the remembrance became provokingly indistinct. Out of it came to me but one idea, but that stood forth with startling, irresistible force. Through the dream, and afterwards with increasing persistence, I was haunted by the question: 'Will there be a letter for her at Madeira?' It was borne in upon me, in a manner not to be withstood, that issues of the very gravest nature were hanging upon the answer to this question. It filled my mind to an extent quite absurd and incredible. I longed to speak to her about it; yet the very same reason rendered it impossible that I should do so. It was easy, you will say, to address to her some such words as these: 'You, I suppose, like the rest of us, expect news at Madeira?' How many times such words were on the tip of my tongue! But the more strongly I was impelled to speak them, the more strongly I felt that the speaking of them would be an unwarrantable liberty, a presumptuous request for a confidence that could be nothing short of sacred. While my mind was still tortured by this ever-increasing curiosity, we reached Madeira.

"A trivial, but still quite compelling, circumstance occurred there to prevent my learning what I wished to know; and until we had left the island I neither saw nor heard anything of my friend. That no letter had come on board for her I afterwards ascertained; but she had gone on shore, and of her movements

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while there no one seemed to have any knowledge. A few hours after we had started, I saw her for a moment at the door of her room, and one glance at her face was sufficient to tell me that, whatever the answer to my dream-question, the result for her had not been happy. All the gaiety, real or assumed, was gone now, and in its stead there was such an expression of agony and hopelessness as I trust I shall never see again on the face of any human being. It was not a tear-stained face that I saw there—had it been so, it would have been infinitely less sad. There was in it only a rigid stony despair that told me clearly that consolation would be in vain. Not that I had time to think of offering any, for the meeting was but momentary. She shut her door instantly, without one word or glance of recognition. She did not appear at dinner, and all that evening I paced the deck alone, hoping, though hardly expecting, that she would come to join me. The saloon was quiet and unmusical that night; she had been so largely the life and soul of it that her absence caused a blank that no one seemed to have the heart to try to fill. Once I ventured near her door, with an insane idea of knocking, and proffering my help in I know not what way, or asking her whether she would care to walk on deck, or something. Of course my courage failed me, as I had known it would, and I only lingered near her door for some time, listening, I am ashamed to say, to her movements. She seemed as though engaged in packing up, or putting things in order; I heard her opening and shutting drawers, and now and again she paced the small room with firm and regular tread.

"That night I hardly slept for thinking of her; but I will confess, to my shame, that my haunting idea was not so much one of solicitude for her, though that was present too, but rather the same intense curiosity that had been with me for three days, the question now being: 'Had she, or had she not, received a letter at Madeira?' Towards daylight I went to sleep, and slept fitfully, with this question still ringing in my ears.

"My curiosity on that point was never satisfied, for next morning she was nowhere to be found."

"And what was the explanation?" somebody asked.

"There could be but one explanation," I replied. "The idea of murder was not, I think, suggested by anybody. For my part, I would not have entertained it for a moment. Save only the nature of her trouble, everything seemed clear to me. Strangely enough, the affair caused no stir here after we arrived. I really

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don't know that it ever found its way into the papers."—"How sad!"—"How interesting!"—"How romantic!"—"How mysterious!"—"How unsatisfactory!"

And, amid a rustling of silks, and these half-pleased, half-awed feminine murmurs, to which the male element listened in scornful silence, Mrs. X—— and the ladies left the room. Some good Samaritan took charge of my opposite neighbour, and disposed of him somehow or other. I have never seen him since; and what was the nature of his connexion with the X——'s, or how he came to be their guest on this, so far as I know, solitary occasion, I have never learnt.

As we were turning our chairs sideways, in the new-found delight of elbow-room, stretching our cramped limbs, and going as near to yawning as good breeding will permit, young Talbot Sprake said to me:

"I say, old man, isn't it a little dangerous to indulge in a long story like that? Aren't you afraid of boring people?"

"My dear boy," I said, "if it bored you to listen to it, what do you suppose must have been the sufferings of the poor wretch who had to tell it?"

"Oh, I say! Really? So sorry! By Jove, I always thought you fellows enjoyed telling them! Have a cigarette?"

On our arrival in the drawing-room, Mrs. X——, who, beyond all women I know, has a sensitive and grateful appreciation, said to me: "Mr. ——, have I shown you my husband's latest folly in etchings?"

So we went to a remote corner of the room, and Mrs. X—— said: "I don't think any one can see us here. I want to shake your hand, and I really can't wait until you're going away."

A few minutes afterwards Mrs. X—— introduced me (by special request, as I divined at the time) to a lady. It was the lady who had been guilty of a small, a very small, interruption in the course of my narrative.

"Oh, Mr. ——, I was *so* interested in that story you told in the dining-room!"

Here was an evidently sincere compliment to my narrative powers. "Indeed?"—"Yes. The fact is, I knew the lady."

"You knew her?" I queried, in a tone, I fear, of unbelief.

"Well, no; not exactly; that is, I had never met her, but I knew her people very well, very well indeed."—"Really?"

"Just fancy your being on the same ship, and knowing her so intimately! How small the world is!"—"Is it not?"

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"Of course you were not quite accurate when you said that the account had not got into the papers. It did, you know, a little; but her people were very influential, and hushed it up to a great extent. How remarkable that dream of yours was!"

"Very remarkable."

"I wonder what that letter she got at Madeira—or rather, as you say, I wonder whether she did get one!"—"I wonder!"

"How interesting it all is! Do you know, it's very strange, but I have never before come across any one who had travelled by that ship."

"How large the world is!" I suggested.

"Is it not? And what you said about 'Auld Robin Gray'—by the way, I hope my foolishness didn't disconcert you."

"Not at all."

"I was startled for the moment. Of course at the very beginning I thought of her, but when you mentioned 'Auld Robin Gray,' I knew it *must* be she. You know, there *was* something of that sort in it."—"Really!"

"Well, more or less like it. But come, Mr. ——, of course you know all this quite as well as I do. I can see very plainly that you didn't tell the whole story downstairs."

"Upon my word, I don't know a single thing more than I have told you."

"Nonsense! nonsense! Of course I respect your motive for saying so, but you surely don't expect me to—— Now, Mr. ——, if I were to tell you all I know, and you were to tell me all you know, between us we might easily be able to clear up the whole affair. There's a great deal of mystery in it, I assure you; nobody quite understands it yet."

"I am afraid I shall not be able to help you."

"Come, come, Mr. ——, you really are very unreasonable. Why, it seems as if Providence had thrown us together for the very purpose! Your having been on board, my meeting you here to-night, your happening to tell the story——"

"I admit," I said, "I quite admit that the coincidence is very strange."—"Is it not?"

"But, to my mind, the most extraordinary part of the whole thing is——"—"Yes?"

"Is the fact that I have never been to the Cape in my life, and that, until I told her tragic story this evening, I had never seen or heard of the lady!"

W. B. TARPEY.

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WOMEN OF NAPLES.

BY CONSTANCE EAGLESTONE,

AUTHOR OF "THE SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE," &c.

THE woman of the upper class in Southern Italy may be described as a brilliant humming-bird, whose irresponsible existence is passed in flashing her own bright hues in the sun. To her sisters of the lower orders the lot of the hewers of wood and drawers of water has been given. In the city which has claimed for its own peculiar use the name of Beautiful, labour is more equally distributed, but in the districts around—in Capri above all—whatever burden is heaviest and task most distasteful, is handed over to those who are least able to bear it, and one constantly inclines to exclaim with a young naval officer here the other day: "I don't know how these Italians can *live* under the disgrace of seeing their women slave as they do!"

In studying woman, however, one of the earliest things to be learnt is that she never really needs pity unless she is unhappy, and that, judging from appearances, the lower-class maidens and mothers of Il Regno, as they still call Naples, are not. Life cannot be taken as easily now as it was twenty years ago, before the Sardinian Occupation, when every one who was not a beggar-supporter was a beggar, and few, unless they so inclined, must work before they might eat; yet the women round about the Bay, and those who are scattered over the vine-clad hills of the interior, are tall and straight, and bright and comely as ever.

The following is the simple history of a day of thousands who live in the little "cities," which gem the curving shores of the southern half of this peninsula. Carmela rises while it is still almost night, ties a brightly coloured kerchief over her fresh white blouse and dark petticoat, and places a thick pad, the badge of her trade, on her black curly hair, which was brushed

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out and plaited up a week ago, and will need no further attention for some time to come. Then she cautions her little son to be punctual at school, and not keep the good priest waiting. If he be a boy of any spirit, however, she knows he will not dream of obeying her, but will run down to the Marina, and spend the day in gnawing cast-away melons, plunging into the sea, and demanding *una bottiglia* for imaginary services from every passing stranger. His sister, quite oblivious of the fact that she is bearing a very fair proportion of the Wrongs of Woman on her little brown brow, cheerfully follows her mother, for she is ten years old to-day, so is forthwith to be instructed in her profession—that of a beast of burden.

A new wing is to be added to an hotel, an embankment to be extended to enclose another acre of a vineyard, or a breakwater to be carried fifty yards further out to sea, and as the men are all fully occupied in puddling up lime to make cement, in turning the handle of a construction for raising small blocks of stone singly—that very machine which Romulus invented when he began to pile up his wall—and in laying the light hollow bricks one on the other, it is necessary that Carmela and her little girl should help the other women to begin the real work of the day; that is, to go down to the water's brink, pick up the blocks of stone thrown down there out of the barge, and carry them up the steep slope to the point where the additional wing was being spread.

Carmela carefully places the pad she has prepared on her child's shining hair, then selects a large flat stone, and puts it on the top; being a practical geologist she knew at a glance which was the lightest of those strewn about; and understanding thoroughly the law of balance, she was aware that a large stone would be less likely than a small one to slip from its place and paint a black bruise on her little one's shoulder or instep. That done, she straightens her shoulders, bids her hold her head well up, plant her little foot firm, and let her arms swing loose from her side; then sends her off up the hill, snatching up the nearest of the big boulders, and raises it hastily up to her own pad that she may follow her little girl to see that no careless pedestrian runs up against her, causing the unaccustomed burden to quiver or fall.

Up and down the hill, till their shapely shoulders must ache and their laden brows throb with pain and fatigue, the mother and her child pass, while the sun beats fiercely down upon them,

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and the hot pavement which they tread blisters their brown feet. There can be no scamping of work, for an Argus-eyed inspector sits to watch it, and would have much to say if an attempt were made to slip away with fewer than the full tale of bricks. However, his task is no difficult one, and, fortunate man, he is never made to feel a tyrant, as however strict and stern his orders be, these sunny-natured women always obey them with a smile.

At noon an hour of grace is usually given, and then Carmela and her little daughter sit down in the shade, the latter forgetting her weariness in her triumph at having made her *début* and being proclaimed to the world as a grown-up woman of ten. They now for the first time that day break their fast and feast on a crust of sour bread and a slice of a water-melon. This meal will be repeated at eight o'clock, just before they go to bed; but if Carmela's husband were not a prosperous and industrious man, she, as is the case with most of her neighbours, would eat once in the day only. Try to think what that means: to rise at dawn; to go out unrefreshed, even by a cup of milk; to pursue an occupation making heavy demands on physical vigour; not to return home till dusk, and then to propitiate nature with a little fruit and bread, or, in moments of wild extravagance, a dish of macaroni. Truly air and sunshine are more sustaining in Southern Italy than elsewhere.

As they lean back against the tufa wall, the Italian tongue, more silent here when owned by a woman than a man, is loosened, and the stiffened fingers, released from their toil, fly abroad as they help on the conversation which concerns the *Festa* to-morrow, when the mother means to buy a bright yellow kerchief to twist round her dusky locks, and a gingerbread cake in the form of an anchor, its coil of rope marked in white sugar, for the little workwoman beside her.

These *Festas* form the chief pleasure of the Neapolitans, young and old, and will keep them wandering about the little Marina in delighted groups till midnight. They usually take place on Sunday, being mostly connected with the services of the Church; but one is occasionally kept on some week-day, thus consoling the workers for the want of a Saturday afternoon holiday, which is not recognized here. It should have been mentioned while dawn was still young, that before beginning the labour of the day, the mother and child had entered the little church, sprinkled holy water on their brows, and knelt for a few minutes at the steps of the altar. Superstition and ignorance

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cling close to the simple untaught women of Southern Italy, it is true, but hovering above them is the spirit of true religion, childlike, trustful and sincere, and its gentle teaching, along with much which might be well put aside, includes some honest practical ideas of duty to oneself and one's neighbour.

The nightmare of the lower classes is the terribly excessive and oppressive taxation. Their wages are pitifully small, and few as are their natural needs, and fewer as they compel them to be, they cannot meet the demands made upon them. Far and wide that divining rod which resolves to evoke something out of nothing reaches, and taxation is almost reduced to the level of an absurdity; poultry, it is said, are to come under the ban next, and the peasants who have earned a few soldi by selling an occasional egg to their richer neighbours, must now hide away their chickens in the cellar, and tie up the bill of the crowing chanticleer with an end of coloured twine for fear they should call down a visit from the Syndic.

Così si fa when a nation is bent on being great.

Let us return to the little home which Carmela left before dawn. It consists of a single room, and this is shared between her own family and that of Serafina her sister. As they are prosperous they can afford a window and a balcony, the latter counting almost as a second room. Two or three households established above, have no light or air excepting that which is supplied through a small unglazed hole in the wall, usually stopped up with tufa-bricks. And yet they live!

Serafina is a fruit-sorter by trade, but as she has various calls upon her before going up to the lemon-groves, she rises first of the family. First she must bring in water. This is done in a primitive fashion by stepping out on to the balcony, and letting down a pail into the round stone well in the court beneath. Until a short time ago, one of the daily occupations was to carry up salt water. Now a tax is laid on the sea. If Serafina wish, she may carry up a little pitcher of Neptune's great gift in her hand, but nothing out of which she might extract a few grains of salt for her mess of macaroni and tomatoes. A string of the latter are hung up on the balcony to dry, and below is an earthen pot containing a root of the same, to which she gives a few drops of water as she swings in her pail.

That done, she takes in her hand a little cresset of oil and some flowers picked the night before, for she is going up the hill and will pass a strip of vineyard which used to belong to her father,

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and these are votive offerings to be laid at the shrine of the Virgin who protects the vines and olives. It is a neat little recess, and the Holy Image is marked out on porcelain tiles and protected by a sheet of glass and frame of sculptured stone. One of these stands at the corner of each vineyard and every turn of the road, and none is without a tender reverent handmaid to do it honour. A couple of fox-coloured dogs rush frantically out barking loudly as she enters the iron gateway, but fawn upon her as they recognize her voice. They are the guardians of the vineyard, and most effectually secure the safety of the purple clusters above their heads.

As Serafina leaves the plot of high raised ground, a subtle change comes over her. She steps cautiously as though afraid of being overheard, and looks guiltily round. She has no designs on the grapes, it is clear, and as she has a husband and children at home, cannot be stealing to meet a lover under a trysting-tree. Moreover, the trysting-tree is not of Neapolitan growth.

This is her case. Her brother Antonio—most men down here are named Antonio, the rest are called Antonino—has been employed through the summer on board a yacht belonging to one of the visitors at the big hotel where her sister works. Two nights ago as he was cooking his supper in the little vessel, he upset a kettle of boiling water, severely scalding his toes. He promptly thrust his feet into the sea to effect a cure, and consequently, poor fellow, suffered greatly all night. In the morning his kind patron, hearing of the misfortune, arranged for him to be received and treated at the hospital of the village.

In fear and trembling Antonio repaired thither, for a Neapolitan knows better than to trust nurses and doctors. However, the padrone had ordered and he must obey, though doubtless he would be subjected to cholera or to dissection before morning.

His courage held out for three hours, during which he took off his bandages seven times to show his fellow-patients how his toes were going on. Then he looked down from the hospital balcony where he had been placed to take the air, and saw that the gate into the court-yard stood ajar. Now was his time—not a moment was to be lost, he must fly.

He stole softly downstairs. Twice he had to go back thinking he saw the shadow of some nurse in the distance. Once he took refuge in the chamber of a bed-ridden old man, who nodded

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sympathetically and wished him good-luck. He would not stand in the path of a poor patient with scalded toes, fleeing away on his heels for his life.

So by dint of doubling and crouching, and hiding in friendly corners, Antonio escaped, and got up on to the hill, where he spent the night, after sending a message to his mother to come and find him there with food in the morning.

The two consulted darkly together, and then thought it would be wise to change his place of concealment and go up higher, near where the quail-nets were hung on Grande St. Angelo. The hospital authorities would not take the trouble to seek him so far away, and in a day or two the evasion would be forgotten, and he could return to his work on the quay.

Serafina now turned away, having first made an interested inspection of the toes, and struck off to the lemon-groves of her employer.

A reprimand for being late met her; but as she was the strongest woman in this part of the country, and showed her white teeth in a very sweet and deprecating smile, the lecture was not long. Then she bent her shapely shoulders, and nearly a hundredweight of the lovely, delicately-tinted fruit, piled high in its basket of cane, was lifted on to the pad on her head. Thus laden, she set off down the hill, moving with a firm elastic step at a quick swinging trot, in company with half-a-dozen others At the end of a mile they pause a moment to rest, but converse curiously little. The women in the country round the Bay talk little; their work is hard and their subjects are few.

The momentary rest over, the women make their way down to the sorting-room near the quay, where the grand work of separating good and bad takes place. A large lemon-boat is waiting in the harbour to sail away at sunset, and the trader is most strict in his proving of the fruit. He has some hundreds of light wooden cases on board, some of which have been filled under the trees of the fragrant grove, others prepared down here by Serafina and her companions. He opens one of these at random, and if a single damaged fruit is found within, he would refuse the whole cargo.

The hours of the *Festa* next day are not spent in idleness. Building and fruit-sorting are suspended, but knitting-needles click busily, for every one round Naples knows how to twist silk and thread into socks or wraps, and each little maid as she runs out of school gathers up a handful of slender curved bows of

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steel, which she curls round her web to good purpose, though in a manner strange to unaccustomed eyes.

Nets, too, have to be prepared for the fishers in the harbour, and, most graceful of implements, the spinning-wheel of Margaret is seen in door and window, its soft silky mesh gleaming softly as it passes through the lithe brown fingers of a representative of one of the handsomest, strongest, most industrious, most virtuous, and, despite the manifold hardships which assail her, most contented women of the South of Europe.

The Neapolitan women of the middle classes are less pleasant for the writer to portray than those either above or below them. The energy and cheerfulness of the one and the art-of-doing-nothing gracefully of the other are at once denied them. And, gravest charge of all, their beauty and comeliness are reserved for display before the outer world, while disorder and slovenliness of the most exaggerated description are the rule at home.

Cherchez l'homme usually holds good when you seek the cause of a woman's fault, and in this point the Neapolitan male is not free from blame. He is inordinately proud of his wife and daughter when he takes them out in all the glories of silk and lace for a drive on Sunday afternoon, or to swell the crowd round the Cathedral of S. Januarius when the miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of that favourite Neapolitan saint takes place; but he appears to be entirely indifferent to their charms under his own roof, where, from the fact of work and play alike leading him abroad, he spends but little time.

However, as unmixed condemnation is neither pleasant to utter nor to hear, and none else here seems practicable, this branch of the subject shall be set aside.

A Neapolitan woman of the upper classes can smile sweetly, dance lightly, coquet gracefully, dress daintily. There her powers for the most part end. To blister her soft palm with an oar, to prick her taper fingers with a needle, broaden her slender foot by walking, or draw lines across her smooth brow by study, are proceedings so exceedingly foolish that she wonders even foreigners care to go in for them. Art is impossible for her. No amateur can practise under the eye of the painter-monarchs of her native land, and in music she prefers to make use of her correct ears and innate appreciation as a listener, rather than as an interpreter. Were it otherwise, what instrument could she play? The mandoline and the guitar savour too much of the people; the piano is a foreign importation; the violin is never

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really at home unless touched by the loving hand of a Teuton or Hungarian, and when the silver trumpets with their syren tubes are drawn out of the cotton-wool in which they are kept at the Vatican, artists must be summoned from Paris before their sweet sounds can be wooed forth.

Orchestral and operatic music is all that Italians really care for, and as they very wisely decline, as a rule, to admit these as "chamber music," instrumental melody is rarely heard in private houses.

In her infancy the tiny Neapolitan is frequently tended by an English nurse, and the influence of the latter will probably extend to throwing the swaddling-bands out of the window, and introducing a wholesome diet of bread and milk in place of fruit and wine; but she will not be able to divest her nursling of her blue silk shoes and white lace frock, and send her out to make mud pies in a serge smock, nor will she be able to throw down the wall which divides the establishment of the little *ragazza* from that of the *ragazzo*, her brother, who even in his earliest years works and plays at different hours and in different localities from her. The result of this is a curious mutual indifference between children of the same family, very unlike the devotion varied by pull-hair fights of the boys and girls of an English play-room.

While in the nursery, the little Italian shows her immense superiority at least in one way to the maiden of the north, for she learns to chatter fluently in at least four languages.

"English is so hard," confessed a young Italian, aged seven, the other day. "French and German, and Neapolitan and Italian, that is all very well, but we don't know how to make English."

A girl of the upper class is rarely educated at home; in some cases she will be sent to Rome, or even to Paris, to be brought up at the Sacré Cœur: if so, she will probably not see her parents half-a-dozen times between the age of ten and sixteen, and her brothers and other relatives not at all. Convent life is very quiet and monotonous, but the firm, yet gentle sway of the nuns is not disliked. Occasionally the influence of some little black sheep will disturb the general tranquillity, promote inclinations to peep over the garden-wall, and to pinch the point of a rival's little finger; but, as a rule, the soothing atmosphere is found very congenial, and most girls declare that having obeyed parental wishes, and glanced at the world and mankind, they will return

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and take the veil. If an Italian woman have several daughters, she usually prefers to leave one to the Church. There is something restful to her in the thought that one at least of her little brood is placed where peace and freedom from care can hardly fail to be secure. Most family portrait-galleries here include a reserved cabinet for representations of such cloistered sisters of the house.

There are naturally some brilliant exceptions to the statement that the women of Southern Italy are merely sunshine-loving butterflies, but its general accuracy cannot be disputed. Even in Rome the cultivation of the female intellect has not been raised to the level of one of the fine arts, though there Queen Margarethe takes a noble lead.

Nostra graziosa Regina, as her loyal subjects like to call her, beguiles her idle hours with the 'Nineteenth Century' and the 'Revue des Deux Mondes.' She plays and sings beautifully, and encourages by her frequent presence at their concerts the musicians of Rome, whether foreigners or natives. She superintended personally the education of her only child, the Prince of Naples. She is most generous in her charities, and among her various good qualities is that of being an indefatigable walker and mountaineer.

To return to the Neapolitan Signorina whom we left in her convent: at sixteen she returns to her half-forgotten home; her flat-soled, little convent-shoes are changed for French boots with points tapering into space, and heels which add two inches to the stature of her seclusion-days. Her good points and bad are carefully catalogued, and her style is decided on; then her chamber-woman and dressmaker are bidden to consider her as their own, while the mother—the Neapolitans walk very well—glides down to consult with the family-confessor about her marriage.

In this direction the priest is still and will probably remain omnipotent. It is a point which Signor Bonghi and his Law-of-Guarantees do not touch. No strained idea of delicacy prevents the *padre* from inquiring into the condition of the Signorina's health, temper, and finance. He has always a fair number of candidates for marriage on his hands, and is honestly prepared to do his best for both parties. If he can assure the mother that the would-be bridegroom does not gamble, and that the charges on his estate do not prevent him deriving a fair income from it, she will feel she is doing well by her child, and will authorize the priest to call on the young man's parents and commence

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negotiations at once. Further north, girls are frequently allowed to go into society three or four years after leaving school before any pressure is put on them to settle down; south of Rome this is rarely the case. To the credit of modern society, be it said, attempts to link crabbed age and buoyant youth together are few. The period between the first meeting of the young couple and the celebration of the marriage is very short, and it is unnecessary to state that here, as elsewhere in Southern Europe, the girl never sees her *fiancé* out of her mother's presence. If they meet in society, the young man may stand for a moment over his Signorina's chair, but it is generally the mother who answers his remarks, and if he lead her away to dance, he brings her back after a turn or two, which have perhaps been made in total silence.

From the above reasons, as will be supposed, marriages between Englishmen and Italian girls are almost unknown. Although our countrymen are quite ready to treat their future mother with a great deal of chivalrous deference, they would resent very much indeed finding that she elected to monopolise all their conversation, and looked severe if stray glances from the young lady's heavily-fringed dark eyes were demurely turned in any direction but that of the black and white tiles which form a Neapolitan floor. Moreover, unless the islander chances to be a diplomatist, it is hardly within the bounds of possibility that he should understand any language but his own, and his Neapolitan charmer probably finds it difficult in the earlier stages of her acquaintance to "make English" with sufficient facility to keep him with her for long—in a crowd, that is.

An Italian male, on the contrary, is frequently found to be the possessor of an English or an American wife. Transatlantic women have a remarkable power of fitting themselves deftly into any hole, round or square, where fortune or inclination may have chanced to cast them. That is not often the case with English maidens, and it must be frankly confessed these mixed marriages, especially in the south of the peninsula, are usually failures. The principal reasons for this are obvious, and it would be both unfair and unnecessary to recapitulate them. The following brief statements may serve to prove how entirely the usual occupations of an English lady are blotted out if she marry an Italian. No one here looks after her own household, and any attempt to do so would be foredoomed. There is no country-house life as with us, and no rector's wife to whom to lend kindly

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aid in looking after the tenants or the poor. The daughters are educated in some distant convent, and the sons probably at the Jesuits' College. All marry early, so their mother enjoys little intercourse with them. The husband could hardly by the most remote possibility be induced to look on domestic life, as we understand it, as either comprehensible or desirable. A woman who reads would be shunned as a bore, and one who did not care to sit for half the day with a cigarette between her lips would be considered a terrible damper—and very rightly so, perhaps, by those who did incline so to sit. Finally politics, a resource of many who are ambitious, or who soar above dress and dance, are a closed subject. The "Makers of Italy" are hardly even names to the wife of the nobleman south of the Tiber. The glories of the ancient empire, the triumphs of mediæval art, the brilliant page which records the successes of to-day, are nothing to her. Naples is still *Il Regno*, and the exiled Bourbon a Bonnie Prince Charlie who may yet re-establish a pleasure-loving independent court on the shores of the Blue Bay, and scatter confusion in the ranks of the Sardinian stranger who in some inexplicable way has imposed his rule upon her.

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PLATES OR BAGS?

BY R. G. SOANS.

CHAPTER I.

THE Rev. John Smith, vicar of Hillsford, and the Rev. Reginald Brown, curate of Billsford, were bitter enemies. The Rev. John Smith was High Church, and the Rev. Reginald Brown was Low Church. The existence of this difference of opinion is, however, hardly sufficient explanation of their enmity, as in many cases the High Church lion calmly lies down by the Low Church lamb; and we have seen the High Churchman preach for his brother of Low degree, attired in the latter's sombre Geneva gown, whilst it is not at all uncommon to see a sound Low Church brother, attired in a Moabitish garment, cheerfully assisting in a High Church function.

But their enmity arose thus. Hillsford and Billsford were small towns about twenty miles apart, supporting between them one newspaper, called *The Hillsford Gazette and Billsford Chronicle*, a journal, of course, widely read in both towns and the surrounding neighbourhood.

Being a worldly-wise man, the editor was what his sterner brother of the *Eatonswill Gazette* would have styled a waverer. He had no wish to see a rival newspaper started in the interests of either political party, so he calmly preserved a strict neutrality between the two. His paper was open to all opinions, and hostile to none. His leaders were models of even-handed justice, and if to-day he had in the discharge of his editorial duties to blame Mr. Gladstone, to-morrow he might find something which required altering in the conduct of Lord Salisbury. But he was not very fond of finding out the weak points in an argument or a policy, or dwelling on the dark side of a statesman's character. "There is enough evil," he used to remark, "around us which we cannot fail to observe; let us therefore try to find out the good which so often escapes

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notice." It is a remarkable proof of the skill with which he concealed his real opinions, both political and religious, that each party claimed him for their own.

The journal was thus a convenient field of battle on which combatants differing from each other in their views, political or ecclesiastical, could meet in battle array, and freely laud their own opinions whilst abusing those of other people. Many were the fights and long were the letters, deep and subtle the arguments which, week after week, were to be found in the columns devoted to the use of correspondents in the said journal. This happy impartiality of the editor was highly satisfactory to all opposing sections. Did A. abuse B.'s actions as a public man or his political opinions, was B. angry with the editor? Not in the least. He spent the intervening week in composing a powerful reply which would utterly demolish A., knowing that his article would find an equally ready welcome in the columns of the journal.

For some months a war had been raging in the paper touching certain ecclesiastical matters of great moment, in which the Rev. J. Smith and the Rev. R. Brown had taken prominent and opposite parts. This of course, considering their views, was only natural. Mr. Smith, for instance, had written many letters of portentous length, fortified with copious extracts from authors, ancient and modern, living and dead, in support of the statement that collecting the alms in church in round bags, instead of in flat plates, was contrary to all the traditions and customs of the Church in all ages; it was a custom not only purely modern in itself, but distinctly Popish in its tendencies. To which, of course, Mr. Brown replied in letters equally lengthy and numerous, supported by arguments equally powerful and convincing, in order to prove that the use of plates had come down from the time of the Pharisees, who sought, by the jingle of the coins on the plates, to attract their neighbours' ears to the fact that they were giving something, if haply they might also attract their eyes to the discovery of what that something was.

Did Mr. Brown seek to prove that a black gown was not sanctioned by the canons of the English Church, and ask in a tone of triumph what rubric enjoined its use? Mr. Smith would reply with the equally pertinent question, where was the sanction for that purely papistical garment called a cassock? If therefore Mr. Brown proved to his own satisfaction that

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Mr. Smith's true place was in the ranks of dissent, Mr. Smith was equally confident that one day Mr. Brown would be found in the Church of Rome, to which indeed, if he were an honest man, he would long since have retired.

There was also a very pretty quarrel as to the legality of a clergyman's going a-fishing in a grey tweed suit. Mr. Brown contended and proved, to his own satisfaction at least, that it was a most unorthodox and unprofessional habit, whilst Mr. Smith, with equal contentment, affirmed and proved that it was one most convenient in itself and sanctioned by the highest authorities.

No wonder therefore they were bitter enemies.

"Dangerous man, that Brown!" Mr. Smith would remark. "Nothing but a Jesuit in disguise. They tell me some of the innovations he is making his rector—very weak man—introduce are totally and purely papistical."

"Dear me," Brown would say, "that Mr. Smith has no idea of decency and order! No business in the Church at all. Why that last letter of his was utterly subversive of all good Church tradition."

It is very evident that each of the combatants considered the other a most unprincipled, or, at any rate, wrong-principled individual. We may add, however, that in spite of their principles they were both hard-working, conscientious parish priests, and extremely popular with their respective flocks. It is impossible to say how long the warfare might have continued, or how much worse enemies they might have become had they continued to remain such close neighbours; but a sudden end came to the fight.

It was not brought about by a truce nor by the signing of terms of peace, but by the flight of one of the opposing warriors. Mr. Smith retired, not only from the contest, but also from the neighbourhood. No, gentle reader, this was not from cowardice or the apprehension of approaching defeat, as you will see from this extract, published on the field of battle.

"We regret to say that our worthy Rector, the Rev. J. Smith, is compelled, owing to failing health, to resign the post he has so long and ably filled. We understand he is about to settle down for a short time in some quiet seaside place before entering upon another and less arduous sphere of work. We wish him well, and can assure him he will carry with him the respect and esteem of all who know him."

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CHAPTER II.

The Rev. Reginald Brown was taking his holiday. The time July. The place Saltburn—a place he much affected, as it offered him all the advantages of a seaside town with the charms of a very lovely inland country.

For several mornings whilst walking on the splendid sands he had been attracted by the appearance of a young lady, who was generally accompanied by an elderly person who might have passed for her mother or aunt. The girl was tall, with a figure which her dress showed off to perfection, fair-haired, with laughing blue eyes, and a complexion which only English air seems capable of either producing or preserving.

Did the Rev. Reginald fall in love at first sight? We cannot say. But at least he thought how nice it would be if he could find out who she was and get an introduction to her. Saltburn would then have another charm for him. What should he do to accomplish his wishes? What? why! the obvious answer was, that he should call on the vicar of the place, offer to preach for him! He would be sure to know all about everybody, and if he did not, why, who could more easily find out?

The Rev. Reginald was successful in ascertaining what he wanted, and by the help of Mrs. Vicar, soon obtained the means of making the acquaintance of the young lady in question, whom he soon discovered to be as charming in manners as she was in appearance. In fact, by the end of three weeks, he had come to the conclusion that he loved Miss Smith, for such was her name, and hoped she might love him in return; at any rate, he meant to ask her.

He did so, and the answer was so entirely satisfactory that it led Reginald to do something else, which also seemed satisfactory to both of them. The interview with the aunt ended favourably to his wishes, as he was able to show her that even then he could afford the luxury of a wife, and might in time inherit a considerable fortune.

The next and final thing was of course to write to Marion's father and ask his consent, which the Rev. Reginald hoped to have no difficulty in obtaining.

The two lovers found the time pass so delightfully in talking of themselves, that it is scarcely wonderful they had exchanged few confidences about their respective friends. And, after all,

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under the circumstances, a little trustful confidence is not out of place. If Jane is charming, why the probability is that Jane's mother will be charming too, and if she is not, it is all the more creditable to Jane that she should have persisted, in spite of obstacles, in doing what was so obviously her duty. Besides, you don't want to marry Jane's mother, too, even if it were allowable, so the loss of a few charms on her side is not an overwhelming calamity.

But Reginald did learn that Marion's father was a clergyman then living at Bognor in Sussex. She herself had been living for some years with her aunt, sometimes in England, but generally abroad. Her aunt, she said, had practically adopted her, which Reginald considered proved the aunt's good taste, unless of course she wanted to keep her for ever.

Marion had also learnt from Reginald that, although he was but a curate, still they would not have to wait until he got a living, as he could afford to marry when he liked.

In due time the Rev. J. Smith's answer came. It was decidedly unsatisfactory, and indeed seemed, at any rate for the present, to put an end to all hopes of a happy ending to their romance. But although the reply was so unfavourable, the Rev. Reginald was hardly astonished that it should be so; in fact, had it been favourable, his astonishment might have been even greater.

"Bognor, July 10th, 1888.

"SIR,—I presume, of course, from the tone of your letter that you write in ignorance of the fact that I have recently resigned the incumbency of Billsford and removed here. On becoming acquainted with that fact, I am sure you will hardly be surprised at my declining to receive you as a suitor for my daughter's hand. I could not, consistently with the principles I hold, entrust her happiness to one whose views are not only totally opposed to my own, but also antagonistic in so many points to the teaching and practice of our Church. Even if I could overlook such differences of opinion, I am convinced that your union with my daughter would but result in unhappiness both to yourselves and also to the friends on both sides. I must ask you, as my decision is final, not to persist in urging your suit upon my daughter against the wishes of her friends.

"Yours faithfully,
"J. SMITH."

"The Rev. R. BROWN."

It was awkward, certainly! To find that the father of the girl you hope to make your wife is the man you have been

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fighting with for months in the columns of a newspaper is rather startling, nay, more, it is alarming.

No, Reginald was not astonished at the answer. For his part, he would have been quite prepared to welcome Mr. Smith as his father-in-law in spite of his erroneous views. As he was Marion's father, he must have a great deal of good in him, and besides, men are often better than their creed.

And, after all, when you came to look at the thing, it did not make much difference how the offertory was collected, and, as to going fishing in a tweed suit, well, no doubt it was very comfortable. The Rev. Reginald began to think he had been fighting for victory, rather than for truth.

Well, he must go and see Marion. That was evident. What would she do? Was she a believer in plates? If so, the situation seemed hopeless in the extreme.

On his way to the hotel he encountered Marion, who met him with a countenance that bore traces of recent tears. Holding out a letter to him, she exclaimed, with a voice choking with emotion—

"Reginald, dearest, see what papa says! Can you explain? Oh, how dreadful it is!" And the poor girl began to sob bitterly.

Reginald took the letter, which briefly stated that her father forbade her engagement with him, and told her to come to her home without delay.

After Reginald had explained the mystery of the apparently unreasonable letter, Marion's spirits rose at once; since she knew all she felt happy again.

"After all, Reginald darling, you don't mind plates, do you? I am sure I don't mind bags!"—and Marion looked inquiringly at her lover.

"Well, love, of course, as a matter of principle, I do care," was the cautious answer. "But I don't think I care as much as I did, and perhaps in time——"

"Why, perhaps in time you won't care at all!" said Marion triumphantly; "let me go and write to papa at once!"

"My dear child," exclaimed Reginald in a horrified tone, "that will make matters ten times worse! Why, your father will think I have no principles at all!"

"Well, dear, perhaps that is better than having bad ones," said Marion slyly.

"But you see, love, it is not altogether a question of *my*

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principles; it is your *father's* principles too. Why, I have proved—oh, of course I mean"—hastily correcting himself—"tried to prove that *his* are all wrong!"

"What! you have tried to prove that my father is all wrong?" inquired Marion, with mock indignation. "Why, you will be proving, or trying to prove, next that his daughter is all wrong!"

"Well, dear, I am afraid that is just what your father thinks! But, Marion love," said Reginald in an anxious tone, "I am afraid you don't take the matter very seriously."

"Seriously? not a bit. Why, I thought he must have found out you were not a clergyman, or had dropped a baby in the font—we had a curate once who did—or something equally horrid. Why, this is nothing!"

"Well, love, I am afraid your father will never consent! Because really I was very hard sometimes!"

"Hard, were you? Hard on my father? Ah, that's the reason he won't allow our engagement, he thinks you may be hard on me!" said Marion, laughing. "But, seriously, Reginald," she continued, changing her tone of careless banter; "seriously, my father is the best, the dearest, and the most kind-hearted man in the world. Did you see in the paper that the poor people sent a petition hoping he would not leave them; and do you know what they gave him when he left?"

"No," said Reginald; "I merely saw he had left Hillsford."

"Well, dear," continued Marion, "I am sure when my father knows you—and I tell him I love you as dearly as you love me—he will consent in time. He will do nothing to spoil my life, and, besides, I don't think he objects so much to bags after all"—then Marion laughed again, and continued in an earnest serious tone, "We may have to part for a time, Reginald, for I shall do what my father wishes, but, believe me, I will never give you up, if you will wait. I shall be twenty-one in less than a year, and when that time comes I shall write to you. But, dearest," she went on, seeing he looked still rather downcast, for he did not feel very hopeful as to Mr. Smith's consenting; "I know long before that time comes I shall see you with his permission. He is the kindest father in the world, and, if he sees I am unhappy, I am sure he will consent to our engagement. I can look forward quite hopefully to the future. And then, you know, as he is away from Hillsford, he may not care so much about plates," she added, with an arch smile, "and perhaps, dear, you won't——"

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"Care so much about bags?" interrupted Reginald. "I shall hate the sight of a bag as long as I live!" He said this in such a solemn, lugubrious tone that Marion burst into a merry laugh, in which she was soon followed by her lover.

As soon as the train which bore away his sweetheart was out of sight, the young man hastened to his lodgings and wrote to the Rector of Billsford, who was a very old friend of his, asking him to accept his resignation of the curacy without the usual formality as to three months' notice, and explained the circumstances which made the request desirable, writing also to ask the bishop's acceptance of his resignation. As he had been allowed to work at Billsford without receiving any stipend, he thought he might be allowed to retire without a very long notice. He could not go back to Billsford, that was evident, and he must get away from the chance of seeing that odious journal which had been the means of separating him from Marion.

He also registered a solemn vow that never again would he publish a letter in a newspaper. For any young clergyman, with principles not too firmly grounded, this was perhaps a wise resolution. He then left Saltburn and hastened to town, where he spent some months in helping a friend of his who was the vicar of a large parish in the East End. After he had been there some months, an aunt died who left him some considerable property on condition that he took her name. As this large addition of fortune simply implied the small addition of a syllable to his name, the cheerfulness with which he complied with the condition is not perhaps very wonderful. And, after all, Brown looks more dignified when increased to Browning.

CHAPTER III.

It was one evening towards the end of April, and the terminus at Euston was very full of travellers preparing to depart by one of the fast trains for the North. There was a crowd round the ticket-office, and some individuals were getting rather nervous as the Scotch mail was due to leave in a very few minutes. Among the many others was a tall stout man dressed in a suit of light tweed, who asked for a ticket for a sleeping berth for Edinburgh. This was the Rev. J. Smith, who was just bound North for a fortnight's salmon fishing, and, of course, acting upon his principles, had for the time discarded his suit of

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customary black and clerical collar, for something more sportsman-like, and for fishing certainly more convenient. He asked for the ticket and took it up. But he could not put down the money for it, for, on searching his pockets, he found, to his intense horror, that they were all guiltless of purse or even the smallest silver coin of the realm. Where was his purse? Stolen? Lost? Strayed? well, that was scarcely possible, but at any rate it was missing.

Where could it be? And then he remembered that, after paying his bill at Charing Cross Hotel, he changed his dress, and must have left his purse in his black coat. After all, it is not always most convenient for a clergyman to assume mufti, even when he goes a-fishing! His coat was in his portmanteau, his portmanteau was in the luggage van, and the train was due to leave in five minutes. Should he rush to the guard and get it hauled out? All in five minutes? Would the guard let him have it? It would be most irregular.

"Now then, sir, four pounds ten, if you please."

"Well really," said Mr. Smith, "I find I have left my purse."

"Well, sir, very sorry, but of course I can't let you have your ticket," said the clerk; and Mr. Smith, feeling anything but comfortable in his grey tweed, was about to depart in utter discomfiture, when a voice said—

"Here! give me that gentleman's ticket and another like it for Edinburgh."

The tickets were duly handed out and paid for by the unknown owner of the voice, which belonged to a young clergyman, to wit, the Rev. R. Browning.

"I see, sir," said he, addressing Mr. Smith, "you are in difficulties; allow me to have the pleasure of helping you out."

"Thank you," replied the Rev. John Smith, "I can't tell you how much obliged I am! I must have left my purse in another coat. Really most awkward! And if you can wait till we get to Edinburgh——"

"Oh! pray don't trouble about that," said Reginald, "and you had better allow me to offer you a little more till we get there," continued he, presenting a sovereign, which was also most gratefully accepted.

On reaching Edinburgh, Mr. Smith asked Reginald if he were fond of fishing, and, on receiving an answer in the affirmative, pressed him to come and join him on the Tay for two or three days if he could find time.

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"Well," said Reginald, "I have come on business, but if I find I can spare time, you may expect me; but I have no tackle, as you see."

"My dear sir," eagerly replied the other, "pray don't mention that! I can easily rig you out."

And then they separated, mutually pleased with each other. Reginald found he could spare a few days, and consequently joined Mr. Smith in his fishing, where he enjoyed some very fair sport.

No; the two clerical sportsmen did not exchange confidences with regard to their ecclesiastical views. Reginald was quite satisfied with his experience on that point already. And Mr. Smith was convinced that such a fine, manly young fellow as Reginald—a capital angler too—must hold correct views; that is, of course, views exactly like his own. And with regard to the details of parish work, its trials, disappointments, successes, perhaps Mr. Smith thought that, being in mufti, the discussion of such subjects might appear incongruous, at any rate; he did not open up the subject, and as Reginald's experience was as yet rather limited, why! like a wise man, he kept it to himself. Besides, after a hard day's work, the discussion of pure business would have been a great strain; far better and easier was it over a cigar in the smoking-room at the hotel to fight once again the battles of the day. How splendidly did that last fish fight! What a near shave it was at the end when the man was not quite ready with the gaff! What a killing fly the Scarlet Lady was, and so on *ad infinitum*.

During the few days the two were together they had become fast friends, and this fact led to feelings of deep regret which found expression in such private utterances as these:—

"Ah! what a pity it is," sighed the Rev. J. Smith, "poor Marion did not fall in love with a really splendid young fellow like Browning! None of your namby-pamby men like Brown! A man like that would not spend his time in worrying about such trifles as bags! Although, of course," he added, as principle came in, "such things are quite wrong and totally opposed to all sound Church principles."

"What a fine, genial, large-hearted man Smith is," said Reginald enthusiastically to himself. "Knows how to land a big fish too. Ah, if poor Marion's father were only like him how happy we should have been! Fancy his objecting to a man because he did not like plates! The idea is quite too absurd," and Reginald smiled.

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"Browning," said the Rev. John Smith to his friend, when the latter was about to take his departure, "you really must come and see me! I want to show my girls the man who helped their father out of such a scrape, and I am sure they will be delighted to see you. Only unfortunately, as I told you, we are very unsettled just now, quite birds of passage, in fact; so I can't give you a permanent address, but you give me yours, and as soon as we get all straight again I hope you'll come and see us, and if there is any trout-fishing near, why, we'll have a turn together among them."

Of course Reginald said he should be delighted to renew their acquaintance, although he did not feel so sure he should care about meeting the daughters. If they were very nice they would remind him too painfully of Marion, and if they were not he should feel sorry for poor old Smith, who deserved to have nice daughters.

CHAPTER IV.

Some two months later, when Reginald was working away in his East End parish, he received the following invitation from Smith:—

"Middleton Rectory, Basingstoke, June 16th, 1889.

"DEAR BROWNING,—We are settled at last. I told you I expected the offer of a quiet country living from a friend, and here we are. Come and stay as long as you can. The Test is in capital order just now. Write and say when we may expect you.

"Yours truly,
"J. SMITH."

Reginald had been working very hard, and this invitation opened up to him the prospect of a very agreeable change, so he wrote back saying he should be down in a day or two.

On reaching the Rectory, to which he was personally conducted by the Rector, Reginald was taken into the study, the Rector observing, "I am sorry all my girls are out, but they have gone to a tennis party. They are fond of all outdoor sports, and are capital walkers, so I hope you will make them show you the country."

The two men continued chatting together for some little time, and then Mr. Smith heard his daughters' voices in the hall, and called out, "Marion, my dear, come here. I want to introduce my new friend, Mr. Browning, to you." His elder daughter had by this time reached the study door, when he continued, "I

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hope you will make his visit as comfortable and happy as possible."

Marion certainly began well, for, as soon as she saw Reginald, she rushed forward and threw herself into his arms, which of course rapturously opened to receive her.

The Rev. J. Smith stood aghast All powers of speech failed him. He rubbed his eyes. Perhaps they were failing too? No, it was an awful reality!

You introduce your daughter to a perfect stranger with the innocent remark you hope she will try to make his visit a happy one, and then she rushes into the said stranger's arms! Had they both gone mad?

Before, however, he had time to think very much, his daughter, tearing herself from the stranger's arms, rushed into his own, gave him two or three hearty kisses, and then exclaimed, "You dear, kind man! I always said you were the best and kindest father in the world! How sweet of you to give us both such a charming surprise!"

Here Reginald, rushing forward, seized both his hands, and, shaking them warmly, exclaimed rapturously, "My dear sir, how can I thank you for this unexpected happiness? How noble of you to forgive those horrid letters of mine!"

Poor Mr. Smith was bewildered. At last, the rapture of the lovers having a little subsided, he was able to gasp out, "Marion, my child, do you know this gentleman?"

"Know him, papa? Why, this is my Reginald!" she answered, looking fondly at her lover.

"And, Mr. Browning, do—do you——"

"Know this lady?" interrupted Reginald. "Why this is my Marion!" and he put his arm once more round her waist.

Mr. Smith looked even more bewildered, but at last stammered out, "And who—who then are you, Mr. Browning?"

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Smith, that I am the late Mr. Brown of Billsford."

"And I, sir, am delighted to hear it!" cried Mr. Smith, also getting excited, as he rushed forward, kissed his daughter, and warmly shook Reginald's hand. "Delighted to hear it; and I am charmed that my daughter has won the heart of such a fine, manly, young fellow! Shake hands once more, Browning. Marion, you have made your father very happy. Kiss me again, my child!"

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A PLEA FOR THE CRITICS.

In his admirable essay "The Choice of Books," Mr. Frederic Harrison has justly complained that our literary fibre has degenerated, and that we have not now the courage to attack the really great books of the world, which every one indeed admits to be difficult at first for the majority. He repeats Butler's complaint, that the time spent in reading is often the worst spent of the day, and pronounces the infinite majority of the books we read to be not worth reading.

Probably everybody who has anything like a conscience in intellectual matters, everybody who recognizes that books are or can be something better than the mere rivals of wine or tobacco in the process of killing thought, will admit that there is some truth in this. The world deserts the great authors, and for what? Perhaps for the newspaper, with its inspiring record of the assembled trivialities of yesterday: perhaps for the last worthless novel which "all the libraries" are offering, whether it be of the school, whose highest object is to reproduce for us with tedious exactness the most insipid and colourless incidents of our every-day life; or of that other which, not content with the empty scum which floats on the surface of life's stream, goes below to search out and bring up the filth which sometimes lies at the bottom. Or if we are not votaries of the novel or the newspaper, there is another alternative suggested by Mr. Harrison. Our literary conscience is strict, and our taste superior, and we have a praiseworthy desire to know something about the great authors: and so we read, not Dante or Shakspeare, but their biographies, criticisms on them, remarks about them. We read, as Mr. Harrison says, "a perfect library about the 'Paradise Lost,' but the 'Paradise Lost' itself we do not read." In fact, we read, not the poets, but their critics.

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Any one who seriously believes that the critic is of real use in the world, will see that there is here an accusation which he is peculiarly called on to meet. It is one, too, which a critic who is worth the name must feel keenly, especially if he be old, and have spent many years in lecturing or writing upon literature. He who has perhaps passed his life in loving and grateful study of the great poets, who can never forget that he owes them not only an ever-present possibility of quiet happiness but also moments of intense and inexpressible though secret joy which will stand out clear for ever in his memory; he who fondly hoped that he was paying some small mite of the vast debt he owed; he who would ask no better reward than to see all the world bow down before his idols, enter into his joys, love and reverence the masters whom he has so long revered and loved;—he, the faithful and devoted disciple, finds himself accused of occupying himself the place which is his master's due.

Let us see then if there is not something after all to be said on behalf of the critic. And first a word as to this objection implied rather than expressed by Mr. Harrison; for he makes no direct charge against the critics. It amounts really to nothing more than this: only a limited amount of time can be given to reading, and of this, criticism occupies a portion which might be better employed. This is certainly a statement to which in itself it is very hard to demur; indeed no one can deny its truth. But, when called upon to make his reply to it, the critic may justly point out to Mr. Harrison, or to the numerous other people who hold this view, that it is on him that the *onus probandi* lies: he is bound to show that the time spent in reading criticism not only *might* be but actually *would* be better employed, if he succeeded in shaming the critics into silence.

Is he so certain that Dante and Shakspeare and Milton would have more readers if they had fewer critics?

That may fairly seem more than doubtful, I think. The critics indeed would be the first to take their stand by his side in his crusade on the behalf of the best books; they have all their lives indeed, if they are not unworthy of their calling, been preaching (in the wilderness) the very doctrine which he is so eager to have accepted; their profession and their duty is simply a constant sifting of the good from the bad, a patient and unwearying exhortation to the world to refuse the evil and choose the good.

And do they so entirely fail? The untrained public cannot always judge easily for itself, frequently does not even know

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where to look out for good literature and has no time to go through the process of sifting. Dean Bradley, not long ago, confessed in the preface to his Lectures on the Book of Job that he had been first led to feel an interest in the subject by Mr. Froude's eloquent study. There are many others who, without being able like the Dean to help the world to share their enjoyment, will never cease to thank Mr. Froude for guiding them to the mysterious book which is the richest and deepest of all the books of the Old Testament, in the eyes of the lover of literature. How many more are there whom the Dean of St. Paul's has brought as willing worshippers to the feet of Dante? or whose enthusiasm for Virgil was first awakened by Mr. Myers? or who owe their first love of Goethe's poetry to Mr. Lewes's brilliant record of the most complete and ideal intellectual life that has been lived since the days of Athenian culture? There are those, too, and not a few, who owe to the greatest of recent English critics their first acquaintance with names, which are of a very different order indeed to those of Job or Dante, or Virgil or Goethe, but which possess each a charm and attraction peculiarly its own: those who will always feel that it is not the least of Matthew Arnold's many claims on their gratitude that it was he who first introduced them to Joubert and to Eugénie and Maurice de Guérin. Instances like these, —and every one who cares for literature could add to them from his own experience—must be enough to prove that the critic is not the mere cumberer of the ground which he is accused of being. Estimated at the very lowest, he performs the functions of the preacher, who, doomed himself to a speedy and certain oblivion, is content if he may be permitted by the discovery of fresh beauties, by the opening out of unsuspected truths, by the mere glow and enthusiasm of his exhortation, to give new life to the book of which he speaks.

This is certainly not the least useful of the critic's functions, and to cite it is all and more than all that is needed for the refutation of the charge of blocking the way that might lead to the great authors. It is not hearing sermons that makes men give up reading the Bible. But however useful and important this function may be, and however sufficient it may be as a defence of those who write criticism, it is not, after all, their principal function. The essential business of the critic is, as his name implies, to judge. Like other and more important judges, he will probably and indeed inevitably deliver himself in the

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course of his judgments of remarks bearing on wider issues than that immediately before him. His object in literature, as theirs in law and morals, will be the promotion of "true religion and virtue, and the punishment of wickedness and vice." They seek to encourage right action: he right thinking and right expression of thought. Like them, he has no quarrel with the prisoner at the bar, his judgment is founded on principles and is not affected by personal considerations. In one respect indeed he is far more fortunate than they. They have to deal in their judgments with criminals, or at the best with prisoners accused of crime. The literary judge is often judging one whom he admires. Their most favourable verdict is one of not guilty. His judgment may often take the form of an *éloge*.

The world, or at least the civilized world, has no hesitation in admitting the utility and necessity of the criminal judge, but it is by no means so certain of the reality of the services conferred upon it by the critics. It is quite aware, or at any rate was till very recently, that it would fail ludicrously if it attempted the task of distinguishing between the innocent and the guilty at law. Lately indeed there have been some signs that, even in matters of law and morals, the democracy would like to try its hand at judging for itself. But this is an old story in intellectual matters—and an old story which has not grown out of date. A single stroll through a picture gallery, a single evening in a drawing-room, is enough to show the most hardened sceptic with what easy confidence all the world gives his or her opinion on pictures and books; how far men who have never given half an hour of their invaluable time to thinking about trifles like art and literature are from dreaming that there is anything inappropriate or still less absurd in their uttering so loudly and supporting so stoutly their opinions on Vandyck or Milton?

And yet this is very curious if one sets oneself to think about it! Talk of shooting at a dinner party; you will not hear the men who never shoot laying down the law on the subject; talk of engineering, and you will not find the artists or the lawyers explaining that the Forth bridge is badly constructed. But all the world, engineers and sportsmen, lawyers and parsons, whoever and whatever a man may be, he has not the slightest hesitation in pronouncing a picture bad or a poem good. No one who had not thought or read or had experience on the subject would dream of insisting on his opinion on Egyptology, or Physiology, or Dynamics, or Banking, or Cricket. But people who have not

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an idea what literature means often become warm, and more than warm, if their opinion of the superiority of Dickens over Scott or Byron over Wordsworth is disputed or disregarded. Even with regard to music the lay world is inclined to suspend its judgment on Beethoven's Symphonies; but it exhibits no such modesty with regard to Turner. The absurdity of this state of affairs needs no proving, but it is interesting to try to get at the causes of it. People ought not, no doubt, to express their opinions on any subject which they do not understand. But there are unfortunately a great many people, and very excellent people too, who would very rarely have a chance of expressing their opinions at all on any subject of intellectual interest if this rule were strictly followed, and as no one likes to confess to a universal ignorance, we seize upon the subjects we think least likely to betray us, and we give our opinions on the Royal Academy and Lord Tennyson's last volume. It is obviously easier and probably more interesting to talk about Art than Egyptology; and besides, when we look at an obelisk we are quite aware that we do not understand its language; but when we look at a picture, we are never struck by the fact that it too speaks a language which we do not understand. The old hieroglyphics have something mysterious about them; they even inspire a certain awe which compels silence; but a picture, what is it but lines and colours which we all understand? We have eyes, and what more is required? Probably too we have never dreamt that art has any higher function than to copy nature; the only question that occurs to us about a portrait is whether it is like or not; and it has never struck us that a picture is not a photograph, and that, if we pass over the rare exceptions in which the photographer can show his artistic gift by grouping or his composition, the employment of the word "art" with reference to photography is a mere impudent theft for the purpose of advertisement. Turner's "Approach to Venice" is bad art for us, because we have been there and do not recognize it; his cloud dreams are false, because we have never seen such clouds and do not approve of dreams; and Reynolds was a bad portrait-painter, because "there never were such women." In a word, we are judging art without knowing what art is. Even our knowledge of the material basis of art, our observation, for instance, of clouds and women, is not nearly so complete or correct as we think; and, as for the soul of art, the imagination, without which all art may justly be counted dead, we are so far from

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understanding its importance that we do not even suspect its existence.

So much for the value of popular judgments in matters of art. It is obvious that popular judgments in matters of literature are formed in the same easy, confident, haphazard fashion. Clearly here is the critic's field all ripe to his hand. In these days we are all occupied in putting something or somebody to rights; why should the critic be blamed any more than the preacher or the politician for trying to persuade his neighbours that good and bad, truth and error, are words which have a meaning, in art and literature as in morals and politics, and that it is on this side, and not on the other, with this poem, this picture, this style, that truth and vitality will finally range themselves?

For, observe, there are two things the critic has to teach: it is not enough to declare the merits of one work and the defects of another. He has to go back to the beginning, place himself in the attitude of Socrates against the Sophists, and try to show that in art and literature we are not at the mercy of the changing opinions of the many, that we *can* discover real truth about them, attain to clear convictions. He will meet with difficulties, for everybody (especially, perhaps, in England) thinks he has a right to his own opinion on these matters; but he will go on patiently and even hopefully for all that. Even in matters of literary criticism, "fortis est veritas et prævalebit."

What, then, is it exactly that he will set himself to do, and what will he carefully avoid doing?

He will carefully avoid large general principles as a snare and a danger. The world will very likely demand them of him as a sort of "sign," but he will not be tempted or flattered into the attempt to give laws to the human imagination. It may well be that fixed rules can be given as to many things that go to make up good literature, as, for instance, the order and arrangement of a book, and, in fact, all that part of literary merit which springs from the intelligence alone. But even here he will be on his guard against the formation of codes; and in all that belongs to the highest part of literature, into which the imagination and the soul enter, he will be well aware that rules are useless, and that the power of judging with insight and certainty, comes, not of applying the most skilfully contrived rules of thumb, but of long and patient study of widely different models, gradually producing a critical taste which, though built up so carefully, has the swiftness of instinct. The truth is exactly as Longinus put it

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long ago: *ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἐστι πείρας τελευταῖον ἐπιγέννημα.*

And next, he will be unceasingly on the watch against the critic's special danger and temptation—that of insincerity. He will make for himself an inflexible rule—never to praise or blame a man or a book at second-hand. His business is to express his own opinions, and to retain always, as Matthew Arnold says, "an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what he is saying." He may well, like other people, accept the established opinions, and he will always treat them with respect; but, like other judges, he can only speak of what has actually been brought into court before him. He will therefore never allow himself to so much as apply an epithet to a poet in passing, unless the epithet be for him and to his personal knowledge just and applicable. Corneille cannot be for him "le grand Corneille," nor La Fontaine "le bon La Fontaine," unless personal acquaintance has made them such. So in one sense he will be independent, or rather self-dependent, almost to pride; for he knows that the thing of all things essential in criticism is genuineness, frank, outspoken sincerity, without which vitality is impossible. But, if he is Protestant in so far as he knows the worth of private judgment, he is Catholic in his large respect for tradition. "Securus judicat orbis terrarum;" "Semper, et ubique et omnibus;" mottoes like these will be always in his mind, and if he finds that in very truth Homer produces but little effect on him, or that his ear cannot catch the majestic roll of Milton's verse, or the sweet and gracious murmur, rising and falling like a summer sea, which the world has loved so long in Virgil, he will be humble and silent, recognizing that these are questions on which the verdict has been pronounced for ever, and which it is not permitted to discuss. He will not pretend admiration, or even quote admiration, where he does not feel it; but he will note himself what faculty it is that is wanting to him—how it comes about that he is denied a pleasure possessed by all the world beside.

So much for the negative side of the critic's preparation for his task. He will avoid as a snare and a danger, all kinds of hard-and-fast rules; and he will avoid, still more carefully, as a fatal, and for his work a finally destructive vice, the slightest touch of insincerity. If we come now to the positive side, what direct aim will he have before him in his self-education, to begin with, and afterwards in his work as a critic?

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He will occupy himself first of all with the raw material with which he is to work, the sound basis of a wide knowledge without which he is nothing. A judge's decisions are worthless unless he knows his books, or, to make the analogy with the critic even closer, unless he is well up in the previous cases. Wide reading is, however, more for a critic than a raw material, or even an instrument; it is the food without which he cannot live, or at least cannot be a critic, as necessary for the development of his judgment as beef and bread are necessary for the development of the muscles of a miner or a navvy. With plenty of reading, acted upon by steady thinking, his judgment grows as surely and as silently as the navvy's muscles grow under the operation of plenty of meat digested by regular labour.

And as the body flourishes best under a varied diet, so too with the mind. It is important that the critic's reading should not only be large and constant, but also wide and varied. For, as Matthew Arnold put it, the critic's duty is to give himself up to "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." His aim must therefore be to know all the literatures that are worth knowing; an unattainable ideal, of course, but none the less, like other ideals, stimulating and invigorating. In his reading he will carefully avoid falling into the error of too many old grammarians and pedants, who can never cease correcting and criticising and noting small points, and never give themselves up for a moment to simple enjoyment. He will be well aware that there is no greater error. "They mistake the nature of criticism," says Dryden, "who think its business is to find fault;" he who has never enjoyed intensely, will never judge well.

He will not be afraid to read the lesser authors, even sometimes when they have little merit of their own. Nothing helps us more to appreciate Milton than to read some pages of indifferent blank verse after rising from the "Paradise Lost:" and it has been said, perhaps too severely, of Florian, that his value for us is that he teaches us to appreciate La Fontaine. It is, in any case, certain that to fully realize the high qualities of the great men, we must be acquainted with their inferiors; for all judgment is comparison as all knowledge is relative; we should never be duly grateful to a great colourist if we did not know by experience the poor and cold effect produced by the greatest of bad colourists.

"All study to be useful," said Mark Pattison, "must be in a

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spirit of deference, though not," he immediately adds, "in a spirit of servility." It is in this way seeking everywhere to enjoy and to understand and yet not afraid also, when necessary, to condemn, that a man may gradually build up for himself a power of judging in literature. He must be always ready to hear appeals against his first impressions: it may indeed sometimes happen that the matter is too clear to allow of any question of "granting a case" for a second hearing; but the great names at least who have held their own for a century or more may claim a right of appeal. There is no surer test. Weak productions, whether in literature, art, or music, lose on further acquaintance; the great men gain. There must be a great many average unmusical people who were puzzled and wearied when they first heard a Symphony of Beethoven, and who never miss one now when they can help it. It is the same thing, probably, in spite of the 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality,' with the enjoyment of beautiful scenery, a thing most important for any one who occupies himself about poetry in any way. The appreciation of beauty in nature, as in art, seems to develop slowly often by force of varied experience and comparison. There are people, for instance, who date an immense increase in their feeling for nature from the day they settled in London. A critic of poetry should, of all men, try to love and understand nature, for how much of what is best in literature has been inspired by the magic of natural scenery?

I have been talking of literature, and saying that it is the critic's business to enjoy, understand, and judge literature. Will it be thought too presumptuous if I say one or two words on the difficult question of what literature really is?

I am certainly not going to attempt a definition. Definitions of ideas so delicate and so difficult to exactly grasp as literature or poetry, are rarely quite satisfactory, because they so rarely bear the test of close examination, still less the harder test of universal application, though they remain of course extremely valuable, presenting as they do generally some side of the truth, put in pointed language such as will stick to the memory. But what I want to allude to here is not so much a definition, but a view of the nature of literature taken by a man who was himself a master craftsman in the art, and whose every word commands great and universal respect. In his Lecture on Literature in "The Idea of a University," Cardinal Newman maintains that it is of the essence of literature to be personal. "Literature is of a personal character. Science treats of what is universal and

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eternal. In proportion, then, as Scripture excludes the personal colouring of its writers, and rises into the region of pure and mere inspiration, when it ceases in any sense to be the writing of man, of St. Paul or St. John, of Moses or Isaias, then it comes to belong to Science, not Literature. St. Paul's Epistles, then, I consider to be Literature in a real and true sense, *as* personal, *as* rich in reflection and emotion as Demosthenes or Euripides." "On the other hand portions of the Gospels, of the book of Genesis, and other passages of the sacred Volume are of the nature of Science. Such is the beginning of St. John's Gospel which we read at the end of Mass. Such is the Creed. I mean passages such as these are the mere enunciation of eternal things, without—so to say—the medium of any human mind transmitting them to us. The words used have the grandeur, the majesty, the calm unimpassioned beauty of Science; they are in no sense Literature, they are in no sense personal."

Now I suppose every one will go along with this theory up to a certain point. Literature, like Art, cannot be the mere scientific statement of a fact. "Mr. John Brown lives at No. 2 Oxford Street," is no more literature than a merely correct drawing of Mr. Brown's house is art Mr. Brown's house must be seen by the eye of the imagination if the picture is to have the claim of art as well as the value of truth; and the fact that Mr. Brown lives in it, must, if possible, also be viewed through the imagination, and receive from it a certain form and colour before the statement of that fact can become literature. But, according to Cardinal Newman's doctrine, "literature has to do with ideas and science with realities," and therefore, presumably, realities are out of the scope of literature, and a statement of a simple fact, however grandly expressed, cannot be literature, because it is universal and not personal.

Now is this really so? It is certainly a difficult conclusion to accept, and yet I do not think I have misinterpreted Dr. Newman, for not only does he recur again and again to the word "personal," but the instances he cites seem to point the same way. He expressly excludes the opening verses of St. John's Gospel from the pale of literature as the "mere enunciation of eternal things," and the Creed is placed in the same category.

I think one has only to extend a little the application of this view to be alarmed at it. The words "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" form a perfectly plain statement, certainly with nothing personal about them. They are,

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therefore, I suppose, not literature, according to Cardinal Newman's theory; and yet every one must, I think, feel that Longinus was right when he, though no adherent of the new religion which brought the Jewish books into prominence, went out of his way to cite them as an example of the sublime; that they are in fact literature, and literature of a high order. The fact is stated in a way which impresses and fills the imagination; just as it impresses and fills the imagination in Milton's line—

> "In the beginning how the Heavens and Earth
> Rose out of Chaos."

Can it be questioned that the two passages stand on the same plane, the one as good prose, the other as good poetry?

To take only two other instances, it has been often remarked that we can find out nothing about Homer or Shakspeare from their works. There is nothing personal, that is, in their poetry. No definition of literature could of course deliberately exclude Hamlet or the Iliad; but there must surely be something defective about a definition that has, even in appearance, to be strained before it can be made to include them.

Literature must be something larger than this "personal" theory would allow, unless I have been misinterpreting it. There have been people who would wish to call all apt expression of thought, Literature; but we cannot help feeling that if we accept a wide definition like this, we shall be forced to call many things Literature which, as a matter of fact, we never really think of as literature at all, mathematical treatises, for example. May we not say, without being rash or presumptuous enough to pretend to any exact definition, that literature is something which deals with facts or ideas in such a way as to appeal to the moral, or emotional, or imaginative side of human nature? Thus Euclid's Elements, however apt in expressing the thoughts intended to be conveyed, are not literature; they appeal simply to the intelligence, no one is touched by them. A book like Macaulay's 'History of England,' or even 'Aristotle's Ethics,' on the other hand, though containing many bare statements of plain matters of fact, and therefore scientific in Cardinal Newman's sense, is literature, because as a whole it does touch the moral, and emotional, and imaginative parts of our nature.

Accepting this then as a rough idea of what literature is, let us go back to the critic, to our ideal critic. Literature will have

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given him his subject-matter, moral and philosophical studies will have trained his judgment, art and nature enlarged and purified his imagination. He now comes to set to work. What will be the qualities he will look out for in literature, by the presence or absence of which literature will be for him good or bad?

May we say that the first quality which must be displayed in literature is the power of thinking, the second the power of imagination, and the third the power of expression? They will naturally be exhibited in varying degrees by different men. A few, like Shakspeare and Plato, will have them all. Some, like Keats, will have the second more than the third and far more than the first; though if his style has sometimes something confused about it, and sometimes something effeminate, he will show us here and there in those isolated magic pages of his, the power of imagination and the power of expression, united in an unapproachable perfection, as in his 'Ode to a Nightingale,' to cite only one instance:

> "The voice I hear this passing night was heard
> In ancient days by emperor and clown:
> Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
> Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn:
> The same that ofttimes hath
> Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

Then there are others who, like Aristotle, will have the first in far more striking measure than the other two. And with others, like Milton and Virgil and Tennyson, it will be the third that will be the supreme gift.

These are the three gifts to be demanded, or at least desired, in all literature. There are others required by special forms of literature. The dramatic gift enters into the excellence of very widespread forms of literature, and where it is needed its absence is a serious drawback, as, for instance, in the 'Paradise Lost,' and almost everywhere in Byron. A subtle narrative power, easily maintaining the interest, is again the special need of the epic.

Taking these then, or something like them, as large general rules, as to what to look out for and demand in literature, a trained judgment will safely rely upon its own acquired instinct for the rest. Indeed it mainly needs such rules to prevent its being carried away by a personal taste for one side or aspect of literature. It is good, for instance, to have something which will keep us from forgetting, in the midst of our enthusiasm for

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Browning's dramatic power or his thinking power, whether it be the spirit of his thought that we care about, or the ingenious intricacy of the dialectics in which he liked to clothe it, that the absence of the higher qualities of style, the want of anything like sustained dignity in expression and the want of clearness, are serious defects even in the midst of the richest thought, the most speaking and lifelike portraits. It is only in this way, by a large conception of what is required in literature, following upon wide reading, that an instinct for what is really good can be attained, and to spread that instinctive taste is one of the critic's most useful tasks.

How many things taste of this sort, if it once become general, would alter in our popular reading and in our habits of life, there is no need here to enquire. My only object has been to try to restate the grounds on which criticism may not only be defended, but gladly accepted as a work which confers real services on those who care for literature. Every profession has its ideal, aimed at by its better members, if rarely or never attained; and if a high ideal is of any service, there can be very few men who have a higher set before them than that I quoted just now, which Matthew Arnold sets before those who occupy themselves with criticism, "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." I make no apology for quoting the words again; for I do not know where the man who gives much time to reading literature or writing about it, without laying claim himself to original or creative powers, can find a better principle to go upon by which to direct his life. To learn to know the best and then to propagate it; and that is, may we say, to make it both better known and greater in quantity. For the critic ought certainly to be always on the look out to extend his patrimony. The world can never have too many really good books. And this is the task the great critics have always set themselves. We find Boileau constant in his efforts to make his contemporaries see that they had in Molière something more than a writer of very funny farces; Addison was determined that the public he influenced should recognize the greatness of Milton; and, to come to more recent times, Coleridge and Carlyle have stood out before the public as in some sort the sponsors and interpreters, the one of Wordsworth, the other of Goethe.

But with that phrase of Matthew Arnold's in our minds, we may pass to a larger world than that of the critics, whether

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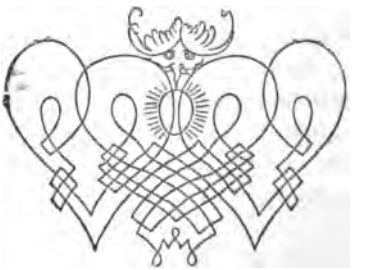
great or small. For in truth they contain a principle of life on which every one may well act. An endeavour to learn the best that is known and thought in the world, is an endeavour to put our intellect to its highest possible use, and we all have an intellect of some sort. Why should not our intellect, however various, find as much help in an unattainable intellectual ideal, as our equally various characters do in the unattainable ideals of duty which religion puts before us? And then the endeavour is to be "disinterested"; that is to say, it is to be free from prejudice and party feeling, undertaken solely with a view to get at the truth. What could be a better corrective of our inveterate habit of looking at all questions, especially questions political and ecclesiastical, from a party point of view, than an unbiassed attempt, in the hour or few hours we may be able to give every day to reading, to look at things with an open mind and aim simply at truth? And then, once learnt, we are to propagate the best that is known and thought in the world. Is there nothing inviting in that? We are all so anxious now-a-days to be missionaries of something or other, to be proselytising for one cause or another. Where can we find a better outlet for our missionary zeal?

Let us then not only not despise or blame the critics, or fancy them superfluous invaders of the literary domain: let us not only recognize that they are, like the rest of us, useful if they try to do their duty, and not otherwise; but let us remember that we can all help them to do their work and join in it ourselves, if we will but seriously try to put our powers of mind to the highest use we can, and aim at getting for ourselves and others, some real glimpse of truth, some real power of thinking justly, soberly, and impartially.

J. C. BAILEY.



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MRS. HIGGINS'S STRANGE LODGER.

BY HUGH MAC COLL.

CHAPTER I.

"HE DO TALK QUEER, DOCTOR."

SOME fifteen years ago I was a young doctor struggling to obtain a footing in the town of Hilchester. It was uphill work, for, in addition to the disadvantages of youth and inexperience, I was poor and friendless. Every other doctor in the town, as a matter of course, kept his brougham. I went my round of visits —and a very little round it was—on foot, and told my patients I preferred it, as I found the exercise beneficial. This was not quite an untruth. As a matter of fact, I did prefer walking to driving, and there is no doubt that my health benefited from the exercise. But I must own at the same time that I had not much choice in the matter; a carriage was out of the question. Now that I have one I do not use it more than I can help. When it is fine weather and I am not pressed for time, nor tired, I still prefer walking to my patients' houses; but then people now know that I do this purely from choice and not from necessity. They did not know it then, or they did not believe it, which amounts to pretty much the same thing, and my prestige suffered in consequence.

One evening I was seated in my modest little consulting room scribbling an article for a magazine—for in those days, as now, I dabbled occasionally in literature—I heard a ring at the bell, and a minute or two after the servant brought in a note. I opened it and read as follows:—

"53, Minnow Lane.

"DEAR SIR,

"Our lodger, Mr. Lee, has been suddenly taken very bad. If you please come and see him.

"Your obedient servant,

"GEORGE HIGGINS."

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This Higgins was a poor shoemaker whose wife I had been attending quite recently; but I knew nothing of this lodger, Mr. Lee. I had heard more than once, in the course of my visits to their house, some one coughing in an adjoining apartment, and had made the remark that I did not like the sound of that cough; but as neither the shoemaker nor his wife volunteered any information about the sufferer, I did not care to ask any questions. My immediate inference on reading Mr. Higgins's note was that this was the "lodger" I was requested to go and see.

And I was right. On my arrival I found in a small dingy room, lying in a rickety, but tolerably clean-looking bed, the emaciated form of a man about fifty. A few dark streaks in irregular patches here and there diversified the general whiteness of his bushy beard and scanty hair; his black eyes shone with a feverish brilliancy, and his sunken cheeks were coloured with a peculiar flush which indicated the nature of his malady only too plainly.

"He do talk queer, doctor," said Mrs. Higgins in a whisper. "He is quite off his head!"

"Who is this? Why did you let him come in?" suddenly asked the sick man, in a quick agitated tone, as soon as his eyes lighted upon me.

"It's only the doctor," said Mr. Higgins; "you said we might send for him, you know."

"Oh, the doctor," he replied, seemingly much relieved. "Give him a chair, and leave him alone with me."

Neither Mr. Higgins nor his wife offered to move.

"He do talk queer," said the latter again; "but he seems more sensible-like now."

"Will you please to leave the room while I have a talk with Dr. Dunbrook," requested the sick man again, in a very decided tone.

"Very well, Mr. Lee," replied the shoemaker, moving towards the door and almost forcing his wife to accompany him. Her curiosity had evidently been powerfully excited by their sick lodger's "queer talk," and she was very reluctant to forego its gratification.

"Now, Dr. Dunbrook," said Mr. Lee, when they were gone, "come and examine me, and let me know how long I have to live."

There was clearly no delirium now, whatever might have been the case before I came. I went to him, felt his pulse, and

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sounded his chest. When I had finished, I kept silent for a little while, wondering what I had better say. He regarded me with a wistful, anxious look.

"Well," he said at last, "how long?"

"With care," I replied, "you may yet last several months, but you may also go off in a few weeks or even days."

"Which is the most likely event?" he asked.

"The former, if you take care of yourself; the latter, if you don't, and especially if you indulge in alcoholic liquors," I said, pointing to a suspicious-looking bottle and glass standing on a table not far off.

"You are mistaken," he replied, "I don't drink; at any rate not habitually. I was seized with a shivering fit to-day, and drank a little hot gin-and-water to warm me. That's all."

"I am glad to hear it," I said; "alcohol would finish you off very quickly. I do not approve of it even as a remedy for a shivering fit. A cup of hot milk and a warm bed would have been better. Were you in bed when you were seized with the shivering fit?"

"No, but I jumped in—or, to speak more accurately, crawled in—directly I had taken my grog."

"That was right; but another time take no grog. Drink some hot milk and send for me at once. At present there is no immediate danger."

I thereupon wrote out a prescription for him and was getting up to leave, when he begged me to sit down again for a minute. I complied.

"You're sure there's no immediate danger?" he asked.

"There's nothing absolutely sure in this world," I answered; "but I don't think so. If you follow my instructions and take care, you will get over this attack in a day or two."

"In that case," he said, "I would rather put off what I have to say to you till a future occasion, for it is not pleasant. I will not, therefore, detain you longer in this hole, which you cannot find pleasant either. Here is your fee, Dr. Dunbrook."

As he spoke he thrust his thin, wasted hand under his pillow, and drew out something wrapped up in a small piece of paper and offered it to me.

"Pray don't talk of a fee, Mr. Lee," I said. "I cannot under present circumstances accept it from you."

"Excuse me, Dr. Dunbrook," he said, "but you *must*, I insist upon it. This is your *second* mistake."

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Here he was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing. "This is your second mistake," he resumed, when the fit was over. "Judging hastily from appearances, you thought I was a drunkard; and now, judging hastily from appearances again, you think me a pauper. You are as wrong in the last supposition as in the first. It is not through poverty that I have elected to take up my quarters in this modest room and somewhat unaristocratic locality. This is a mere trifle, and I only press it upon you because, by your own admission, there is a possibility—though I hope not a probability—of my going off suddenly. I have a service to ask of you yet for which you will be paid handsomely; but it is not a pleasant subject to discuss, so we will put it off till I am better."

"Is it a service which I can render you consistently with my professional and other duties?"

"Perfectly. The unpleasantness is for me, not for you."

"Very good, Mr. Lee, we will discuss it, as you propose, another day. I will call again to-morrow, when I expect to find you much better." With that I bade him good-bye and left.

The next day I found him better—decidedly better, though of course, I knew that the amelioration was only temporary. Upon that point he had no illusions either; he knew as well as I did that his days were numbered, and that the number, though indefinite, was not a very high one. He might last, as I had told him, for several months; he might even last over a year; but, from the condition of his lungs, the end could not be far distant. His paroxysms of coughing, though painful enough when they came, were less frequent than one might suppose.

"What is the mystery which surrounds this man?" I asked myself. "What can have induced him to bury himself in such a place?" In confirmation of his assertion that, in spite of appearances, he was not poor, I had the evidence of what he had given me the evening before; the something wrapped in paper which he had extracted from under his pillow was a couple of sovereigns. Two sovereigns given unasked—nay, thrust upon me—indicated neither pauper nor miser. His conversation too was that of a man of culture and education. On my second visit, as soon as he had learnt that I found him decidedly better, he cast aside the subject of his illness, and talked with me on general topics, mainly politics and literature, but he made no allusion to the mysterious service which he expected me to render him by and by.

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When I rose to leave he again thrust his lean, wasted hand under his pillow and brought forth—not anything wrapped in paper this time, but a purse. With shaking hands he opened this, and took out two sovereigns, the same sum as before. I would have again declined, observing that, however rich he might be, it was more than my usual fee; but he again insisted impatiently, peremptorily, almost angrily; so I pocketed the money without more ado, as any other sensible man would have done.

The following day I called upon Mr. Lee again and with pretty much the same result. He was rather better; we talked pleasantly for half-an-hour or so on things in general; and when I rose to go he again thrust his thin, wasted hand under his pillow, fetched out his purse, and gave me my fee of two sovereigns.

This went on for a week or so longer. When he was well enough to leave his bed, I told him that though I was of course very glad of his money, as I was far from rich, I must conscientiously inform him that there was now no real necessity for my coming so often; that I thought a weekly visit would be enough, unless he had another attack, when, of course, he should send for me at once.

"That's all nonsense, Dr. Dunbrook," he said. "Let it be understood that you come every day, whether I am better or worse, unless I especially tell you that I don't want you. These daily morning chats do good to my mind if not to my body, and if I choose to have them and pay for them I can't see why you should offer any objection."

To this I replied that I should be very glad indeed to pay him a visit every morning, especially as, quite apart from my fee, I really enjoyed a chat with him, but that I had thought it my duty to place the truth before him.

Weeks passed in this way. Mr. Lee's condition remained pretty much the same. The progress of the disease, though sure, was slow, slower than I had expected. He never spoke of it, and did not like me to do so if it could possibly be avoided. And as for death—not merely his own approaching end, but the death of any one, of even a stranger—he could not bear the mention of it at all. The most distant allusion to the King of Terrors made him tremble. This I attributed to his ill state of health, combined with constitutional nervousness—though, even after making due allowance for these causes, I still thought it abnormal.

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One day, however, I had a partial explanation; and on the same occasion he enlightened me also as to the service which he should by and by require of me.

"Dr. Dunbrook," he said, "I daresay you have sometimes wondered that I should have such an abject horror of death, and in your heart you have probably put me down as a miserable coward. That I am so *now* it would be useless to deny; nay more, I will confess that I have been a coward—a wretched, trembling, despicable coward—for the last twenty years or thereabouts. Yes," he said with a shiver, "it was about twenty years ago; I could give the exact date, but there's no need. I am a coward now, but I was no coward before that terrible event happened."

Mr. Lee here lapsed into silence and stared straight before him at vacancy. I made no attempt to divert the current of his thoughts, which I knew were wholly engrossed with the reminiscences of the past. But my curiosity was powerfully excited, and it was with much inward impatience that I awaited his account of the terrible event in question.

"Since I have gone so far," he at last resumed, "I may as well go further and have done with the subject now and for ever. The fact is I saw a dead body once, and the sight so upset my nerves that they have never got over it since."

"Is that all?" I exclaimed. "Surely you do not regard that as a terrible event. I have seen many a dead body, though I am a good many years younger than you."

"Yes, yes, I know," he said impatiently. "Doctors, I am aware, cannot learn their profession without experiences of that kind. But this was in a forest, far away from human habitation. I was alone. I came upon it suddenly, and ugh! the worms were eating it—I cannot go on."

His lips trembled and a spasm passed through his whole body, but still, after a brief pause, he resumed:

"I knew only too well whose that body was, though the features were utterly unrecognizable. Don't ask me to tell you how I knew, that you will learn by and by. But I did know; be that sufficient for the present. Since that day I have had a complete horror of death, and I want you to save me from such an awful fate."

His face grew flushed, and I began to think that his mind was wandering.

Alas! no doctor is a match for the universal conqueror. Skill and science may now and then repulse a premature attack; but

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the final victory is always his. How *could* I save the wretched man from the "awful fate" which he so much dreaded? The shadow of that fate was already upon him, and I thought he knew it.

"Save you from death?" I said, "I wish I could, and myself too. Sooner or later we must all, rich and poor alike, be laid in the silent earth by the great leveller. But come, Mr. Lee, it is not such a dreadful thing after all. Our exit from this life is usually a painless one. A torpor seizes the senses and we gradually sink into unconsciousness. That's all. Pretty much like ordinary sleep, except that there are no dreams and no awaking.

"You misunderstand me," he replied. "It isn't the mere exit from this life, as you call it, that I shrink from. *That* I hope I can face with sufficient courage, and if I cannot, you cannot help me. The dread terror from which I want you to save me comes *after* death."

"What can he be driving at?" I mentally asked. "Surely," I said aloud, "a clergyman rather than a doctor would be the proper person to consult in such a matter."

"A clergyman!" he exclaimed in a tone of ineffable contempt.

"Or a priest," I said, "if you are a Roman Catholic."

"Neither clergyman nor priest can render me the service I require," he replied in a quick querulous tone, "and if you had your usual wits about you, you would not be so confoundedly slow to understand me. I have no fear of hell or the devil, or that apocryphal worm that dieth not; but I have a fear—a most illogical fear I own, but still a most real fear and horror—of that other living, material, filthy worm that bores into the decaying flesh and marrow. That's the awful fate from which I want you to save me. In plain words, I want you to see that my body is cremated as soon as possible after the life has departed from it."

"Ah! now I see your meaning plainly, Mr. Lee. I could not at first understand what you were hinting at. That, then, is the service which you told me some time ago you wanted me to perform for you."

"Quite so, and for which I also said you should be handsomely paid. Do you consent?"

"Give me time to think. There may be difficulties in the way."

"None, I hope, that cannot be got over. Now listen to my

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proposal. In my will I shall insert a clause that you receive £1000 if I am cremated; £500 if I am embalmed and not cremated; nothing but the daily fee which you receive from me while living, if I am neither cremated nor embalmed. From those foul worms I must be protected somehow. Embalming *might* afford the required protection, though less surely than cremation, which would certainly be effectual. Now that I have made my meaning plain to you, will you give me your promise to carry out my wishes when I am gone, to have my body cremated if possible, or if that cannot be done, to have it embalmed?"

I gave the required promise at one. A thousand pounds, or even five hundred, was not a sum to be despised, especially in those struggling days.

"Thank you," he said, fervently; "you have removed a great load from my mind. Now let us talk of something else and never allude to the horrid subject again. You're an unmarried man, I believe, Dr. Dunbrook?"

I was struck by the abruptness and irrelevancy of the last remark, but I attributed it to his eagerness to change the subject of conversation, so I replied that I *was* an unmarried man, and likely to remain so.

"Always?" he asked.

"Probably," I answered; "at any rate for some years. The plain truth is that I cannot afford the luxury of a wife."

"Luxuries which are not always blessings," he said in a singularly bitter tone; "but still, from a purely mercenary money point of view, I am not sure that you would not get on better in your profession if you were married. There is a prejudice, not wholly unreasonable, against young doctors who have no wives at home to keep them steady."

"There's much truth in what you say," I replied; "but still I like my liberty and have not yet met the girl for whom I would sacrifice it even to secure the advantages you speak of."

"Sensible man; but——"

Here Mr. Lee was interrupted by a paroxysm of coughing. What was to have followed his "but" I never knew, for all further conversation was prevented by a knock at the door, followed almost immediately by the entrance of Mrs. Higgins with the announcement that a young lady wanted to see Mr. Lee.

Mr. Lee, who was still coughing, made an impatient movement with his hand to indicate, as I thought, that he did not want to

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see anybody. Mrs. Higgins, however, misunderstanding, or perhaps affecting to misunderstand this gesture, invited some one outside to "walk in." The person addressed accordingly did walk in.

The picture of what followed is still vivid in my recollection. Mr. Lee essayed to speak, but the effort only renewed his coughing-fit. The new-comer, a handsome young lady, with dark hair, eyes and complexion, Italian type, stopped abruptly and regarded him in silence with a pitying, troubled expression of countenance. I rose from my chair and bowed respectfully. Mrs. Higgins quietly and softly shut the door, and remained to hear and see.

"Who are you?" asked Mr. Lee, when he had got over his coughing-fit.

"My answer, I am afraid, will startle you," she replied. "Must I answer now?"

I took up my hat and was going to wish Mr. Lee good-bye, but he stopped me.

"Don't go," he said; "I may want you." Then, turning to Mrs. Higgins, he said, "Fetch another chair."

There were only two chairs in the room—the arm-chair in which Mr. Lee was sitting, and the chair from which I had risen. This I was offering to the young lady; but she did not or would not see it. Her eyes were riveted on Mr. Lee.

In a few seconds Mrs. Higgins returned with the chair, and placing it in the middle of the room, said, "Please to sit down, Miss."

"Miss" did sit down, but in an absent mechanical sort of way, with her eyes still riveted on Mr. Lee. I stood uncertain whether to go or stay; seeing which, Mr. Lee pointed to my chair and bade me almost imperiously to be seated. I sat down, wondering much what was coming. Mrs. Higgins shrank into the darkest part of the room, as if to escape notice; but Mr. Lee's eye sought her and his finger pointed significantly to the door. The look and the gesture were not to be mistaken; so she strode indignantly out of the room, and shut the door after her with a sharp brusqueness that was quite uncalled for.

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CHAPTER II.

MR. BURTON.

"Now that we three are alone," said Mr. Lee, addressing his mysterious visitor, "I should like you to answer my question, Who are you?"

"I repeat that my answer may startle you. Must I give it in the presence of this gentleman? It isn't his fault, for he wanted to leave and you would not permit him."

"He is my doctor, and the only friend I have in the world. I don't care to be left alone with any stranger, male or female; so please to tell me at once who you are and what you want?"

At this moment I fancied I heard a suppressed sneeze just outside. Acting on a sudden impulse, I rose from my chair, marched softly but swiftly to the door, and opened it quickly, drawing it towards me with a jerk. Whatever tragedy might unfold itself later on, the immediate result was comical. The bent form of Mrs. Higgins, with her head down, like a bull in the act of charging, plunged into the room and fell flat down. She had evidently been leaning in a stooping position against the door with her ear to the key-hole.

I offered to help her to her feet again; but she pushed my hand aside, accompanying the action with a spiteful evil glance, and got up unaided. With a flushed face and thoroughly discomposed air she stood staring at Mr. Lee.

"Well, madam," he said sternly, "this is an odd way of entering a room! What have you to say for yourself?"

"I thought you'd called me, sir; my foot caught in the mat."

"Don't try to impose upon us by such transparent stuff as that," he said. "Be off, and don't listen at the door again; or, mark my words, you'll repent it."

Mrs. Higgins turned round and walked away without another word. She took Mr. Lee's warning to heart, for though I suddenly opened the door at irregular intervals after that, I found no one outside it.

"Now," said Mr. Lee, in a rather lower tone, when he was satisfied that she was gone, "I am waiting for an answer to my question."

"You ask me who I am?" replied his handsome dark-eyed visitor; "will it surprise you to hear that I am your own daughter?"

Evidently this announcement did surprise Mr. Lee, and very

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considerably. He convulsively grasped both arms of his chair, stared at his *soi-disant* daughter for a moment or two, and then sprang bolt upright as if galvanised.

"Your proofs," he demanded.

"Mr. Burton," she replied.

"A letter from him?"

"No; a verbal message only. I saw him in Manchester."

"Let me hear it."

She looked at me. Then she walked up to him, and whispered in his ear. In a moment the feverish unnatural strength left him, and he dropped weak and trembling into his chair.

"Enough," he said faintly.

"You are now convinced?"

"Yes; say no more at present."

I had already risen from my chair and taken up my hat. I felt that I had no right to stay any longer, whether Mr. Lee wished it or not. But this time he did not oppose me.

"I won't detain you, Dr. Dunbrook," he said. "Matters have taken a turn which I had not expected."

"Shall I call to-morrow as usual?" I asked, as I held his hand to say good-bye.

"Yes, if you hear nothing to the contrary," was his reply.

So I said good-bye to him, bowed to his visitor, and left.

When I called next morning I found the same lady with him. He at once introduced me to her.

"Dr. Dunbrook, allow me to introduce you to my daughter, my only child, Miss Lee."

"She is not married then," was my mental comment. The thought brought a curious feeling of satisfaction with it. We had certainly made each other's acquaintance in very remarkable if not romantic circumstances, and certain future possibilities loomed vaguely in my thoughts.

"Allow me to thank you cordially, Dr. Dunbrook," said Miss Lee, offering me her hand, "for your great kindness to my father. He has told me all about it. You will excuse my leaving now that you are come, as I have an engagement which cannot be put off. Cheer him up, as is your wont. Good-bye, Dr. Dunbrook. Good-bye, father, till to-morrow."

With that she left us, much to my regret.

"So you find, Dr. Dunbrook, that the actualities of real life are stranger than the inventions of fiction," was Mr. Lee's first remark after the departure of his daughter.

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"So it seems," I said.

"Did yesterday's drama appear to you under the aspect of tragedy or of comedy?"

"On the whole of tragedy. The only comic element was that supplied by Mrs. Higgins."

"The sneaking, inquisitive cat! That woman's uncontrollable curiosity will work mischief yet if I don't mind."

"She will not readily forgive me for the trick I played her."

"I don't believe she will; but you are beyond the reach of her malice. I, unfortunately, am not."

"Surely you are not obliged to stay in this wretched house?"

"At any rate, I do not find it convenient to leave it. But let us change the subject. How old are you, Dr. Dunbrook?"

Though rather startled by the abruptness of the question, I felt no motive for concealment, so I answered promptly that I was thirty-one.

"From what you have told me, I understand that your practice in this town is not a large one."

"Neither large nor lucrative. It just enables me to make both ends meet, that's all."

He was silent for a minute or two, and appeared to be buried in deep thought. Then he sighed wearily and asked, "What age would you give my daughter?"

Though again struck by the strangeness of his question, I answered without hesitation that I thought she looked about twenty-five.

"She is just twenty-seven," he said—"only four years younger than yourself."

Here a violent paroxysm of coughing seized him. When it was over, he seemed thoroughly exhausted, and showed no inclination to speak. But I wanted to hear more about his daughter, so I asked him if she was aware of his real condition.

"Oh yes, quite aware of it," he answered. "I have something on my mind which I wished to say to you about her; but this coughing-fit has completely knocked me up, and I cannot enter upon the subject now. I will do so when you come to-morrow. Longer than that I must not put it off, for I feel that my end is drawing near. I am afraid you must leave me now; I want to collect my thoughts and put things in order before I vanish into ashes. Don't forget your promise. I was afraid my daughter would cross my wishes in that matter; but she has promised not to do so."

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The end was not so near, however, as he feared. Next day when I called he felt better and put off the promised communication about his daughter, nor did he allude to the subject for many days after. Meanwhile I gradually got better acquainted with Miss Lee. I found to my astonishment that she was governess in a family which had recently come to the town for a short stay. I had been sent for professionally to see a member of that family and thus came across her accidentally. As I passed her on the staircase she had an opportunity of whispering to me, "For God's sake don't recognise me, and say nothing about my father."

I need not say that I scrupulously complied with this request. When I was afterwards formally introduced to her I bowed quite gravely as to a complete stranger. In the course of several visits which I made to this family I managed, without appearing in any way unduly inquisitive, to learn a good deal about her. She had been a governess in the family for four years, and was very much liked and respected both by her pupils and their parents.

There was some mystery about her, however. She was very reticent as to her history, though she had let it be understood that she had no relative alive except her father, who, she said, was in Australia. She was a governess rather from choice than from necessity; for regularly every six months she received a remittance of £60 from her father through a certain Mr. Burton, a lawyer in Manchester. But beyond this nobody knew anything. Except on the two occasions already mentioned I never met Miss Lee when I went to see my patient in Minnow Lane, and I learnt from him that she had only called once after. For reasons which he did not explain, it was his express wish that she should not call upon him. I saw her several times in the house where she taught, but always in the presence of others. I never found an opportunity of speaking to her alone, though I much desired it, and not from curiosity alone. There was another motive more respectable. I felt strongly attracted towards Miss Lee, quite independently of the tie of interest which bound me to her father, and—and—in fact, I may as well speak plainly, I felt myself overpowered by the all-conquering passion. If I wanted to penetrate the mystery which enveloped her, it was in order to ascertain what obstacles, if any, might lie in the way of my aspirations.

But at last I obtained a clue to the riddle, and from an

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unexpected quarter. One evening, while I was turning over in my mind conjecture upon conjecture, hypothesis upon hypothesis, the servant brought me word that a gentleman wanted to see me, at the same time handing me a card on which I read *Mr. Charles L. Burton, Solicitor.* A minute after I found myself face to face with the lawyer through whom Miss Lee received her half-yearly remittance.

CHAPTER III.

THE COUSINS.

Mr. Burton, a stout, grey-haired gentleman of about sixty, plunged at once into the object of his visit.

"Dr. Dunbrook, I come on the part of our mutual friend, Mr. Lee."

"Pray sit down, Mr. Burton; I am very glad to make your acquaintance."

With these preliminary words we both sat down, and Mr. Burton began:—

"Two days ago I received a letter from Miss Lee, from which I learn that you have entered into an engagement with her father to have his body cremated when he dies, an event which I understand (fortunately perhaps for her) is not far distant. I hastened over here as soon as I conveniently could on receipt of this news and called upon Mr. Lee, whose money affairs are, as perhaps you know, entirely in my hands. He has placed me in possession of all the circumstances, and has also commissioned me to speak to you upon some other delicate matters which he had not the courage to speak of himself. *Why* he should think it necessary to acquaint you with things which, as far as I can see, do not concern you in the least, I cannot imagine; but that's his affair. He has claims upon my friendship for certain services which he rendered me in the past, and it is my duty to carry out his wishes. I dare say you have often wondered that a gentleman of Mr. Lee's means should take up his quarters in such humble lodgings and in such an obscure part of the town of Hilchester?'

I replied that this certainly had caused me some surprise.

"You must have also thought it odd that he did not recognise his own daughter when she called upon him, and that he even demanded proofs of the alleged relationship?"

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I told him that I had been present on that occasion, and that the circumstance had astonished me not a little.

"Has Mr. Lee ever explained to you why he was so anxious to be cremated?"

"Well, yes," I said. "He told me that he had once, when alone in a wood, come suddenly upon a human body in an advanced state of decomposition, and that the recollection had haunted him ever since."

"Ah, yes; all turns upon that miserable body. It explains not only our friend's wish for cremation but some other things as well. Did he tell you *whose* body that was?"

"No, he did not; but he said that he knew it, though the features were unrecognisable, and that I should learn about it by and by."

"And you shall learn about it, and at once. Mr. Lee has sent me here this evening to tell you about that dead body and about some other things as well."

Here Mr. Burton drew his chair closer to me, bent his head forward, and sinking his voice almost to a whisper said—

"Dr. Dunbrook, will you give me your word of honour not to reveal to a human soul—at least, while Mr. Lee is alive—what I am going to tell you?"

I hesitated.

"Can I consistently, with honour and duty, keep the secret?" I asked.

"Undoubtedly," replied Mr. Burton, emphatically, though still in a low voice.

"Then I promise; but stop. It is understood that I only bind myself to keep silent during Mr. Lee's life."

"That's all; though I think your own sense and discretion will counsel a longer silence."

"Then go on, Mr. Burton; you have my promise."

Mr. Burton thereupon drew his chair still closer, bent his head still further forward, and in a still lower tone said—

"Dr. Dunbrook, will it startle you to hear that *our friend killed that man?*"

I *was* startled—very much startled.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "You don't mean to tell me that Mr. Lee—'our friend,' as you call him—is a—I cannot bring myself to say the word."

"Don't say it," he said; "every one who kills is not *that.* But in a Court of Justice he might find it extremely difficult to

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convince a jury that the word you were going to pronounce was not applicable to him. *I* feel sure it is not, because I know the man and his antecedents, and can take account of important facts which nevertheless no judge would admit as legitimate evidence. But let me put you in possession of the facts, so far as I know them, and then you can form your own opinion."

Mr. Burton thereupon communicated to me his story. I will relate it briefly, as its incidents, though tragic, are only of importance as throwing light upon events which happened subsequently, and which constituted a *dénouement* as surprising to Mr. Burton as it was to me.

Mr. Lee—more fully Mr. George Herbert Lee—had a cousin of nearly the same name. This was George Henry Lee. When they were boys and young men, the cousins were singularly alike, a fact not greatly to be wondered at, as their fathers were twins. But they were very unlike each other in character.

The latter, though clever, was as viciously disposed as the former was upright, straightforward, and honourable. When they were both twenty-three they fell in love with the same girl, a certain Miss Brown, with whom and with whose family Mr. Burton was well acquainted. Both sought her hand. With the full approbation of her friends, as well as in accordance with her own inclinations, she accepted and married George Herbert the upright, to the bitter disappointment of George Henry the vicious. Almost immediately after their marriage young Mr. and Mrs. Lee went to Australia, where they settled and prospered. Two years after, the discarded suitor, George Henry Lee, suddenly vanished, nobody knew why or whither. It was suspected that he had fled to escape his creditors, and that the place of his destination was Australia. But this was only conjecture; nothing was absolutely certain. The conjecture, however, was right—at least in part, for he certainly turned up in Australia not very many months afterwards, though whether the pressure of debt was the main motive of his flight is questionable. The coldness, verging upon open quarrel, which their rivalry had created between the Lees, did not prevent George Henry from seeking out his cousin George Herbert in Australia and calling at his house. The preceding facts Mr. Burton regarded as beyond doubt; but the rest of his story, which rested entirely on Mr. Lee's word, was less satisfactory. It contained some improbable, if not inconsistent elements, and Mr. Burton confessed that if

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he had not the fullest confidence in Mr. Lee, from his knowledge of his antecedents, he might have hesitated to believe him. According to the latter's account, his cousin called upon him, renewed his ancient friendship, stayed with him some weeks, and became at last too familiar with his wife. Mr. Lee did not care to go into all the details, which he spoke of as too painful to dwell upon; but he informed Mr. Burton that the first time he came across his cousin after his discovery of the intrigue was in a solitary wood many miles from his house; that there they had a quarrel, followed by a desperate fight—a duel without witnesses—with their bowie-knives, in which his cousin fell never to rise again.

Mr. Lee never returned to his home after. Leaving his cousin's body where it fell, he betook himself immediately to the bank in Melbourne where his money was invested, converted the whole, except a portion which he settled upon his wife and child, into transferable Government stock, and prepared to leave Australia for ever.

At this point I asked Mr. Burton if the child he spoke of was the Miss Lee with whom I was acquainted. He replied that she was, and then went on.

"But moved by some mysterious impulse," said Mr. Burton, "Mr. Lee felt that he *must* visit the scene of that duel before he left the country, and he did. The result he has told you, and I need not dwell upon its sickening details. The sight has haunted him ever since, and made his life a burden to him. He wrote to me—I was in Melbourne at the time—acquainting me with the intrigue which he had discovered between his wife and his cousin (saying nothing, however, of the duel in the forest), and requesting me to see that the income which he had settled upon his wife and child should be regularly paid them.

"He did not call upon you then?" I asked, as a vague suspicion crossed my mind.

"No, I never saw him till a few months ago, when he paid me a brief visit in Manchester."

"Were you well acquainted with both the cousins?"

"I was with Mr. Lee—our Mr. Lee—but not with the other."

"Go on, Mr. Burton," I said. "I beg pardon for having interrupted you."

"Since then," continued Mr. Burton, "Mr. Lee has been a wanderer on the face of the earth; and now he has come here to this obscure little town of Hilchester to end his wanderings

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and his life together. There are some perplexing things in his story, however, which I cannot fathom. He never communicated with his wife except through me, and I could not persuade him to do so. I called upon her and found her in terrible distress. She vowed to me most solemnly that there had been no intrigue between her and her cousin, whom she said she hated (she did not know then, and I didn't, that he was dead) from her past recollections of him, but as he had renewed his friendship with her husband, and was, moreover, uniformly polite and respectful to herself, she had always tried to conquer her antipathy. Her manner seemed so truthful and convincing, that I was led to believe her, and I wrote to her husband begging him to reconsider his decision, and urging him strongly to call upon his wife and ascertain the real facts of the case. He replied briefly that he had had ample proofs of her guilt, and refused to have anything more to do with her. I wrote again, enclosing a letter from his wife. Both were returned to me from the dead-letter office. Mr. Lee had vanished, and all traces of him were lost. His poor wife, whom I believe to have been perfectly innocent, died ten years afterwards. Before her death she entreated me to see that her daughter was properly brought up and did not want, and she also solemnly commissioned me to tell her husband, if ever I came across him, that with her dying breath she declared her entire innocence, even in thought, of the infidelity with which he charged her—she knew not on what grounds."

"And the cousin?" I asked. "Was nothing ever heard of him? Was his body never found?"

"Not till a few months ago, when his skeleton was discovered with a rusty bowie-knife sticking in the chest. You know the duel, if such it may be called, was fought far away from all human habitations, and in a thick wood."

"And Miss Lee?" I asked. "What were you commissioned to say to me about her?"

"I had almost forgotten that, the most important part of the whole probably in your estimation," said Mr. Burton, smiling. "But it wasn't much, after all. Her father has taken it into his head, from various remarks which have escaped you, that your heart has some leaning towards her; he fears that circumstances will soon turn up which may point to him as the murderer of his cousin, and he wants you to know the real facts of the case. He also wants you to know that, owing to my representations, his belief in his wife's guilt has been considerably shaken, so that

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no blot need attach to Miss Lee in your eyes through either of her parents, if marriage should ever be contemplated between you."

"I suppose it was to escape detection that he came to Hilchester, and buried himself in the obscurest part of it?"

"Undoubtedly. Indeed he has told me so."

"Is that all he commissioned you to tell me, Mr. Burton?"

"That is all, Dr. Dunbrook."

"Well it's a strange story, and has started strange thoughts in me."

"Ah! may I know them?"

"It would not be right to express my suspicions till they have a more substantial foundation."

"At all events I have your solemn word of honour not to breathe a syllable of what I have told you, at any rate while Mr. Lee is alive."

"You have; but within what limits? Does my promise preclude me from speaking on the subject to Mr. Lee himself?"

"No, I don't see that it does. He did not tell me to make that condition."

"I am not debarred then from questioning him?"

"You must exercise your own discretion as to that; but I wouldn't, if I were you, unless he broaches the subject first. Remember his state of health, and how much those reminiscences upset him."

"If my suspicions are correct, he does not deserve that I should be so sparing of his feelings."

"What on earth do you mean, Dr. Dunbrook?"

"It all turns upon that little word *if*, Mr. Burton. I said *if* my suspicions are correct."

"What suspicions?"

"If I find they are well founded, you shall know them."

"And his daughter? Remember his daughter."

"I have the highest regard for Miss Lee—indeed I must confess to a still warmer feeling. Trust me, I will do nothing that would throw a slur upon her name or prejudice her interests. By the way, Mr. Burton, I have a favour to ask of you with regard to her. What is your present address?"

"The Albert Hotel. What is the favour you wish to ask of me?"

"That you give me the opportunity of speaking to Miss Lee alone. I sometimes see her at the Hendersons, where she teaches, but always in the presence of Mr. or Mrs. Henderson, or

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of the children. You are known to be trustee for the £120 income settled upon her, so that it would not be at all out of place for you to ask for an interview with her at your hotel on business matters. The visit could be managed easily. I only ask for a few minutes during which I could acquaint her with the state of my feelings."

"Wouldn't a letter to her be a simpler course?"

"No; Mrs. Henderson informed me that Miss Lee never received any letters except from you, so that a letter in my handwriting would be sure to arouse inconvenient curiosity."

"Well, I will, if you wish it, ask her to call at my hotel; but she must not be inveigled, as it were, into a trap. She must understand clearly *why* she is wanted. Write a letter to her, which I shall enclose in mine. That will be the most straightforward course."

"Thank you; I will. How long do you think of staying at Hilchester?"

"That depends. I *had* thought of leaving the day after to-morrow; but I am deeply interested in Mr. Lee's affairs, and, if necessary, I can stay longer."

"Then I will write to Miss Lee to-morrow, and you will kindly enclose my letter in yours."

"Very good, Dr. Dunbrook; but if I help you in this matter I think I am entitled to some confidence in return. What are the mysterious suspicions at which you hinted just now?"

"I did not want to tell you till I had cross-questioned Mr. Lee and thus confirmed or disproved them. Forgive my apparent distrust."

"Certainly; but having excited my curiosity I must beg you now to satisfy it."

"I will. Let me tell you then, Mr. Burton, that I have grave doubts as to the truth of Mr. Lee's story. I am not satisfied that he is the man he professes to be. I do not believe him to be Miss Lee's father."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Burton, in a tone of the most unfeigned surprise. "You surely cannot have listened very attentively to my story. Miss Lee was born in Australia before her father's cousin left England."

"You misapprehend the drift of my remark, Mr. Burton. I am as firm a believer in Mrs. Lee's innocence of that intrigue as you are. I will lay my suspicions more plainly before you. I believe the man now rapidly drawing near his end at

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Mrs. Higgins's to be—not the upright and honourable George Herbert Lee whom you knew of old—but his vicious and criminal cousin, George Henry Lee."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Burton a second time, and more astonished than ever.

"Yes, Mr. Burton, I believe his tale of the intrigue to be pure fiction invented to lend plausibility to his falsehoods. Of course, I have no positive proofs, but I feel convinced that this treacherous George Henry Lee murdered your friend, his cousin, George Herbert Lee, and then personated him in order to obtain possession of his money. Didn't you tell me that in general appearance and features there was a strong likeness between the cousins?"

"I did, and can vouch for the likeness, for though I was personally acquainted with only one of them, I once saw the photograph of the other and could have sworn it was that of the cousin I knew."

"You can therefore imagine what a temptation this would throw in the way of a needy, unscrupulous, and daring man, such as you represent the original of that photograph to have been; and add to this the scarcely less powerful motive of revenge. Weigh all this, Mr. Burton, and then tell me if my suspicions are wholly unreasonable."

"They indicate a *possibility;* but still the probabilities are, I think, the other way. The risks run would be tremendous. The assassin would have to present himself at Messrs. Gilmore and Co.'s bank, where his victim was probably well known. The likeness would of course help him; but there would be the difficulty of counterfeiting his cousin's voice, which I never heard was similar, and there would be the still greater difficulty of successfully forging not only his signature but his general handwriting."

"Were you well acquainted with the handwriting of your friend before this alleged duel and the rest of it?"

"Fairly so. A few letters passed between us, of which one c two are still in my possession."

"Letters written before that tragedy?"

"Yes."

"You have also letters written—or professing to have been written—by the same man after the tragedy?"

"Yes, I have all those."

"What do you say to my proposal that we should compare those letters?"

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"I have no objection. Come to my hotel to-morrow. Though I still think your suspicions erroneous, I will give you every facility for testing them. But in that case, hadn't you better defer both your cross-questioning of Mr. Lee and your letter to his—well, to Miss Lee—till we have first examined the letters?"

"It would be better and I will do so; but as I am anxious to resolve my doubts speedily, I hope you will not mind a rather early visit from me to-morrow. Can I call upon you at nine?"

"Yes, at nine to-morrow morning I shall be quite ready for you."

CHAPTER IV.

"SEND HER AWAY."

At nine next morning I went as agreed to the Albert Hotel, and found Mr. Burton ready and waiting for me. He proceeded at once to the business which had brought me.

"Here are the letters," he said. "These three were certainly written by my friend, George Herbert Lee. I received them from him *before* the alleged duel. These four I received *after* that tragedy. The latter profess to have been written by the same man. Compare the handwritings and tell me whether they bear out your suspicions or not."

The first three letters referred to matters which have nothing to do with this story. The other four related to the alleged intrigue, and to the other real or supposed events of which Mr. Burton had already given me the history.

I scrutinised the handwritings closely, and was obliged to confess that they did *not* bear out my suspicions. All the seven letters appeared to have been penned by the same hand, and the signatures especially were exactly alike. Each letter was signed George H. Lee, in a free, bold, flowing hand—exceedingly difficult to imitate.

"I must own," I said, "that I find nothing to confirm my suspicions in these letters. But neither do I find aught to remove them. There have been clever forgers before now, and I do not see why George Henry Lee, an utterly unscrupulous scoundrel on either supposition, should not be one of them."

"Just look at that signature," said Mr. Burton, "with its bold, free dashing flourishes; he must be a clever forger indeed who

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could copy it successfully. Can you detect anything cramped or hesitating in any portion of it?"

"I cannot say that I do, but I must draw your attention to the fact that the signature, George H. Lee, happens to be the correct one for both cousins, so that long practice in signing his own name would help to give freedom to Henry's hand in imitating his cousin Herbert's style of doing so, especially if, as is not unlikely, the two styles resembled each other in any case."

"But still the fact remains that your examination of the letters, instead of supporting your hypothesis of personation would rather lead to a verdict against it. On what other grounds then do you base your suspicions?"

"On several: firstly, the inherent improbability, not to say inconsistency, of his story; secondly, his unnatural conduct towards his own alleged child; thirdly, his studious avoidance of an interview with you; fourthly, his ever-haunting recollection of that alleged duel, which, if my suspicions are correct, was no duel, but a cold-blooded murder; fifthly, his morbid fear of being apprehended; sixthly, but really I think I have given enough."

"You have certainly enumerated a goodly number," said Mr. Burton, smiling; "but they do not appear to me, either individually or collectively, as weighty as you consider them."

"Very likely, Mr. Burton; but remember I have seen much more of Mr. Lee, the man staying at the Higgins's, than you have, and my recollection of his talk, and more especially of his manner, lends additional importance to the circumstances which I have stated. By-the-way, didn't you say that Mr. Lee's money affairs were entirely in your hands?"

"They have been so for the last eight months—ever since he read about the discovery of his cousin's body. He saw it in the *Standard*, in an extract from an Australian paper. Then it was that he called upon me at Manchester—to my no small surprise, I can assure you—placed his money concerns in my hands, and took to hiding. He was very ill even then, and a doctor in London had told him that in all probability he had not long to live."

"Why did he place his money in your hands?"

"He had such a morbid fear of being apprehended that he dared not present himself anywhere in order to claim the income due to him for his stock certificates. I draw the money and send it to him in Bank of England notes."

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"How was it that he never thought of changing his name?"

"I believe he did travel under an assumed name before he called upon me in Manchester, and he certainly wanted to hide here under an *alias;* but to this I would not consent. I refused to send the money to him under any name but his own, as I did not want to be a party to any species of untruthfulness."

"And this shuffling on his part never aroused your suspicions?"

"I attributed it, and do still, to morbid, nervous fear consequent first upon that deplorable duel, and now aggravated by a hopeless and most depressing disease."

"For the word 'duel,' Mr. Burton, substitute, 'murder and forgery,' and our opinions will exactly coincide. But we cannot settle the point by discussion. I will question him to-day—at first cautiously, so as not to excite his alarm, and then I will act as circumstances may suggest."

"Well, do as you think proper, Dr. Dunbrook. We have the same object at heart, the interests of Miss Lee, the daughter of my ancient friend, be he the dead or the living Mr. Lee. Go and put your questions, and let me know the result as soon as possible. I will await you here."

I thereupon left him and betook myself immediately to Mr. Higgins's to see Mr. Lee.

"The missus says he's been talkin' queer agin," was the shoemaker's greeting to me as I passed through his shop.

"Ah!—then I am afraid he's worse," I replied, and passed on.

"Talking queer, is he?" I said to myself. "I should much like to listen to his queer talk. I have remarked that when patients 'talk queer' they sometimes let out queer secrets."

I knocked at his door. No one answered; but almost immediately after it was softly opened by Mrs. Higgins. There was a slight flush upon her face and a strange light in her eyes.

"Shall I go?" she asked, in a pointed, sarcastic tone.

"It's not for me to say," I replied, in as gentle a voice as I could assume. "Mr. Lee must answer that question."

I did not wish to offend Mrs. Higgins. She had heard Mr. Lee's queer talk, and I did not know what this might lead to. As I had expected, she stayed.

My very first glance at my patient showed me that he was feverish and excited. He beckoned me to him, and when I was near he whispered—

"Send her away; she worries and frightens me!"

And he looked frightened. His eyelids quivered and his eyes

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dropped when they encountered the stony stare of Mrs. Higgins. Evidently a great change had come over him within the last twenty-four hours. The woman had obtained some power over him and had made him feel it. It was necessary that I should get rid of her; but I did not want to add another cause of enmity to the grudge which she already bore me. So I adopted a conciliatory manner. Going up to her, and slipping half a sovereign into her hand, I said in a low voice—

"Mrs. Higgins, we must humour him in his present queer mood. He wants you to leave; so please do so. But I want to speak to you confidentially about him presently."

She seemed flattered by the confidence and mollified by the coin.

"Very well, sir," she said, with an unpleasantly-knowing smile, and departed.

"What did you whisper to her?" asked Mr. Lee sharply when she was gone.

I put my finger on my lips and pointed to the door.

"Hush!—not so loud," I whispered. "She may be listening. I have bribed her to go. She looks as if she knew something. Have you told her anything?"

"Not knowingly; but she said that my mind had been wandering and that I had let the cat out of the bag in my delirium."

I said nothing, but felt his pulse while I thought.

"Well," he said at last, "how do you find me?"

"Very feverish," I replied. "Your mind is clear now, but I am afraid there will be a return of the delirium."

"Then you think I have been delirious?"

"Undoubtedly you have, and you will soon be so again."

This threw him into an agony of fear.

"Oh, stay with me till it is over," he entreated. "Don't let that woman come in and hear me!"

"Don't be afraid. I'll watch over you, and she sha'n't come in," I said soothingly. "But really, Mr. Lee, if you have nothing on your conscience except what you commissioned Mr. Burton to tell me, you have no cause to be so apprehensive."

"Appearances are against me."

"They are to a certain extent, I own; but not enough to convince a jury, supposing you were to be put upon your trial; a supposition, however, Mr. Lee, which you may rest assured will never become a fact."

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"How do you know that?"

"I am afraid my answer will afford you little comfort."

"Explain yourself, Dr. Dunbrook; don't speak so mysteriously."

"I have no wish to do so, Mr. Lee; the time has now come when it is my duty to speak plainly, and hide nothing from you."

"Don't stop," he said petulantly; "speak quick and tell me."

"My meaning then is this—before the machinery of the law could be put in motion for your arrest and trial, you will be beyond the law's reach."

"What! Is my end so near as that?"

"I am afraid so," I said gently. "I don't like this high fever and delirium."

"But I was so before—months ago, when I sent for you first."

"Yes, but you had then more strength to battle with it. I am sorry to say you are much weaker now. Mr. Lee, I speak to you as I should like to be spoken to myself in the like circumstances. If you have any wishes besides those which you have already stated to me, anything to propose about your daughter, for instance——"

I stopped suddenly, startled by the expression which came over his face.

"Send her away!" he said in a hoarse, terrified voice, staring wildly towards the door.

I turned sharply round, fully expecting to see Mrs. Higgins. But no one had entered; there was nobody in the room except my patient and myself. Evidently his mind was again wandering. The delirium had returned sooner than I had expected.

"Send whom away?" I asked.

"His wife!" he said in an awe-struck whisper. "I thought she was dead."

This confirmed my suspicions, and hardened my heart against the pity which I might otherwise have felt.

"Whose wife?" I asked in a low voice, putting my ear close to his mouth.

"*His* wife, *his* wife!" he repeated in increasing terror. "Stand between us; don't let her see me."

"The wife of the man you killed?" I asked in a whisper.

"In a duel, remember, in a duel; we must stick to that," he whispered in return.

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Then he suddenly directed his eyes again towards the door and said—

"She's come again. Send her away, doctor; send her away; send her away!"

"Who is she?" I asked, still in a low voice.

"His *wife*," he said in a confidential tone, "and she thinks herself my daughter. Isn't it funny?"

With that he burst into a horrid laugh. This brought on a paroxysm of coughing. When it was over, he seemed exhausted, and laying his head down upon the pillow, appeared to doze off to sleep. I sat for some time by his bedside watching him. The feverish flush gradually left his face, and gave place to the sickly paleness which was its usual colour. At last he opened his eyes. As I had expected, he was no longer delirious.

"Are you still here? How long have I been asleep?" were his first words.

"About half an hour," I told him.

"Have I been delirious?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, Mr. Lee, you have."

He looked at me earnestly and inquiringly without speaking.

"What did I say?" he asked at last.

"You said things which greatly surprised me," I answered gravely.

"What were they?"

"Things which it will do no good to repeat, Mr. Lee. I owe you much, and your crimes towards others do not cancel the obligations under which you have laid me. The promise which I have made to you I intend to keep, provided—

"You mean about the disposal of my—my body?"

"Yes; you may make your mind easy about that, provided—"

"You are now going to make conditions?"

"Conditions which it is my duty to exact, and which you ought not to find difficult to fulfil. You cannot now make restitution to the dead; you cannot make restitution to your cousin George Herbert Lee whom you murdered, nor to his dead widow whom you foully slandered; but their daughter is still living, and whatever restitution may still be in your power you must make to *her*."

I stopped and waited for an answer; but he made none. He withdrew his eyes from my face, and was silent.

"Your time is short, Mr. Lee," I said; "have you nothing to say?"

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Then he raised his eyes and looked me steadily in the face.

"On what authority do you bring those charges against me, Dr. Dunbrook?" he asked.

His tone was calm and cold, and not without a certain dignity. His self-possession staggered me. What if I should be mistaken after all? I began to think I had been too precipitate, and now regretted it.

"My suspicions were first roused," I said, "by the story which you yourself commissioned Mr. Burton to tell me, and your strange utterances in your delirium have confirmed them."

"My strange utterances in my delirium!" he repeated contemptuously. "How much would those weigh in a Court of Justice?"

"Probably nothing," I said. "They might not even be admitted as evidence. But, Mr. Lee, you are not now in a Court of Justice, and you never will be. Even if Mr. Burton and I were to betray you—which we have no intention of doing—you are now quite safe from *that* danger. I have already told you why."

"How long have I to live?" he asked, in the same calm self-possessed tone which struck me before, and which was in such contrast to his habitual nervousness.

"Probably not many hours," I answered. "It would be cruel to deceive you."

"Yet at this moment I feel stronger in mind and body than I have done for a long time."

"I see that," I said, "and the sign is not a good one. This fleeting strength heralds your final dissolution. Use it while it lasts to make the only reparation now in your power—a full confession."

He was silent for some time, and appeared to be reflecting. Then, as if he had suddenly made up his mind, he said in an emphatic decided tone, "I will."

After a short pause, he resumed.

"Let me have pen and paper, and send for Mr. Burton."

"You are not strong enough to write," I said. "I will do that from your dictation and you shall sign the paper in the presence of Mr. Burton and myself."

"I will write it myself," he said. "Give me pen and ink, and that flat book to lay the paper on."

I gave him what he asked for. Then I pencilled a hasty note to Mr. Burton and went out and gave it to Mrs. Higgins, requesting her to take it immediately to the Albert Hotel.

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CHAPTER V.

"IS THIS MY MOTHER'S LIKENESS?"

Mrs. Higgins had gone to put her bonnet and shawl on, and I was beginning to apologise to her husband for sending her off thus hastily, when I heard Mr. Lee coughing violently; one of his usual troublesome paroxysms had seized him. This I thought most unfortunate, as I feared it would exhaust the little strength left him before he could write his confession. I stopped to listen. Presently I heard him make a peculiar noise as if his breath caught. This was immediately followed by a gurgling guttural sound which struck my ear ominously. In an instant I rushed back into his room. My fears were only too well founded. The pen had dropped from his hand; he had sunk down upon the bed; his head was lying motionless across his right arm; and blood was oozing from his mouth. I knew at once, though I put my ear to his heart for confirmation, that death had already overtaken him.

I snatched up the paper upon which he had been writing. It only contained the words

"I, George Henry Lee, h—"

He had commenced his confession, but the last spark of life had gone out before he had time to finish it: Still, even that momentary flicker had been sufficient to illumine one dark page in the dead man's history and render it plainly readable. My suspicion was now converted into certainty. Lying lifeless before me I beheld—not the father of Miss Lee, but his assassin.

While absorbed in contemplating the paper which I held in my hand, I was startled by hearing an awe-struck whisper by my side.

"Is he dead, sir?"

Turning sharply round I found myself face to face with the shoemaker. Unperceived by me, he had entered the room softly after me.

"Quite dead," I replied, instinctively removing the paper from the range of his vision.

"You needn't do that," he said; "I've seen it."

"You rather startled me, Mr. Higgins," I replied. "I did not know it was you. There is no reason whatever why you should

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not see this paper. Look, it won't enlighten us much as to his past, which I suspect was a strange one."

"I suspect it was, sir; he said queer things when he was off his head."

"Did you hear him then?"

"Yes, sir, and so did my missus."

"What were they, Mr. Higgins?"

"I dunno exactly, can't quite remember; but he spoke of somethin' bein' a duel and not a murder, and was always afraid of the police comin'."

Just then his wife came in, with her bonnet and shawl on, ready to start.

"It's all over, Mrs. Higgins," I said.

"Lor' have mercy upon us! is he dead?" she exclaimed, casting a horrified look towards the bed.

"Quite dead. Go immediately with the note to Mr. Burton."

She hurried off without another word. When she was gone I again questioned her husband about their lodger's delirium, and what he had said in it, but without eliciting anything of importance.

Mrs. Higgins returned soon after with Mr. Burton and, to my astonishment, made signs to her husband to go out with her. Whether she was awed by the presence of death, or whether she wanted to speak to him in private, I cannot say; but the lawyer and I were not sorry to be rid of the pair. I acquainted Mr. Burton in a few words with all that had taken place since I left him.

"Well, Dr. Dunbrook," he said, "I must give you credit for your penetration. The scoundrel, I confess, succeeded in imposing upon *me*. What had we better do under the circumstances?"

"Don't you think Miss Lee should be at once communicated with?" I asked.

"Certainly; but we must not ask her to come here—at least not yet."

"Of course not. What do you propose?"

"First tell me what the people here—these Higgins—know about this man's history."

"I have just been questioning the husband; it appears they suspect something from certain remarks which escaped him in his delirium, but I don't think they know anything definite."

"Suppose we call them now and question them?"

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I agreed to this, and we called in the shoemaker and his wife. They answered our questions readily, and did not seem at all reticent, but they were not able to add anything of consequence to what we already knew. Their lodger had said "queer things when he was off his head," talked sometimes of a "duel," at other times of a "murder," and was always afraid of the "police," but they had been unable to connect these wild remarks into any consistent whole.

When we had finished our cross-examination of the Higgins, Mr. Burton proposed that everything belonging to the dead man should be placed under seal; this was done in the presence of the shoemaker and his wife, and then we left the house.

"I will call upon Miss Lee," said Mr. Burton, as we walked along; "and inform her of what has taken place; then we all three will hold a consultation in my hotel, or wherever else Miss Lee chooses. Meanwhile, you go to my hotel, unless you are pressed for time, and wait for me there."

To this I agreed and we separated.

I had not to wait long. In less than half an hour Mr. Burton arrived, accompanied by Miss Lee. She was very pale, and the hand which she extended to me trembled in my grasp.

"I cannot understand it," she said, as she sank down into the chair which I had placed for her.

"Try and be calm, Miss Lee," I said gently; "it is no doubt hard to realize."

"But is it really true?" she asked, fixing her large dark eyes upon me with an intensity of gaze which was almost mesmeric.

"It is quite true that he is dead," I answered. I did not commit myself further, as I did not know how much Mr. Burton had told her.

"Yes, I had expected that," she replied; "but is it true that he was not—my father?"

A perceptible shiver passed through her as she hesitatingly pronounced the last words.

"I see Mr. Burton has told you all," I said.

"No, he has not; and I *want* to know all. *Do* tell me," she entreated.

Here Mr. Burton interposed.

"My dear Miss Lee, do calm yourself; you shall hear all in due time when we have looked through the dead man's papers. Excuse me for a few minutes, while I examine some documents which I have upstairs. Dr. Dunbrook here knows more about

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the matter than I do, and will no doubt give you all the information you require."

With that he left us. We were in a private sitting-room, which he had specially engaged for this interview.

"Do tell me," she repeated, when he was gone.

"What do you know already? What has Mr. Burton told you?" I asked.

"My mind is all in a whirl; I cannot grasp the situation. Is it true that he was not my father?"

"I am sure he was not."

"*Why* are you sure? Did he say that he was not?"

"Not in so many words; but we infer it from what he said, and especially from what he wrote. What was your father's full name?"

"George Herbert Lee."

"That was not the name of the man now lying dead at 53 Minnow Lane. Look at this paper. It is the beginning of a confession which he was in the very act of writing when death suddenly seized him."

She took the paper from my hand.

"'I, George Henry Lee,'" she read in great excitement. "Why, that was the name of his wicked cousin!"

"Just so, Miss Lee. And that wicked cousin, dead to-day, personated your father and obtained possession of his property."

"And my real father—where is he?"

I was silent, and tried to collect my thoughts for a suitable answer.

"Where is he?" she repeated, impetuously. "Where is he?"

"Alas! he died years ago."

"Where? In what way? How do you know? Tell me all! Don't keep me in suspense."

The wildness of her manner frightened me.

"My dear Miss Lee," I said, "try and be calm, and I will tell you all I know."

Then I recounted to her very briefly, and with as much softening of the tragic events as I could, the leading facts of the story which Mr. Burton had communicated to me, and I added thereto the various circumstances—such as the man's delirium, which had confirmed my suspicions that her father had been first murdered by his cousin, and then personated. The confession which the latter had begun, and was unable to finish, now put the matter beyond all doubt.

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"I am now quite convinced," said Miss Lee, when I had finished. "But, oh! what a strange and terrible story! Do you know, Dr. Dunbrook, I always felt an antipathy to the man. I struggled against the feeling because I believed him to be my father. I also pitied him because of his supposed misfortunes. Mr. Burton had told me that he had once killed a man—he did not say whom—on very great provocation, and that he was always in mortal terror of being apprehended in consequence. Are you going to cremate him, according to your agreement?"

"Do you see any objection to it?"

"None whatever. Deal with him as you think proper."

"By the way, Miss Lee, he often spoke of you to me after that never-to-be-forgotten first interview between you; and, to do him justice, it was always in terms of the highest praise."

"Very good of him, I am sure, especially as he knew nothing about me."

"Remorse for his past crime may have had something to d with it; though that is scarcely an explanation. It is true he found me an interested listener, and he generally chose subjects of conversation which he thought would please me."

A slight, almost imperceptible blush was her only answer to this remark.

"Have you no relative alive, Miss Lee?" I asked after a pause.

"None. Mr. Burton is the only friend I have in the world."

"It would give me more pleasure than I can express if you would consent to reckon me as another friend."

The red upon her cheeks became more plainly visible.

"Thank you," she said; "I will. I always felt grateful for your kindness to that man when we both thought he was my father; and I now feel more than grateful for your straightforward honourable conduct since you discovered him to have been my father's murderer."

"Don't speak of my kindness to *him*," I said. "In that I only discharged the duties of my profession, for which I was well paid. You will no longer, of course, continue as a governess when this man's affairs are seen into, and you have obtained your rights?"

"I am not so sure about that," she replied. "I cannot easily live alone, and a life of idleness would be abhorrent to me."

"But still it would be somewhat of an anomaly for a lady

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with an income of several hundreds a year to pursue the avocation of a governess."

"How do you know I shall be so rich?"

"I only conjecture it from the liberality with which *he* paid me for my visits."

"He knew he had not many months to live; so that he had no very strong motive for economy. I should not be surprised if he had dissipated all my father's money."

At that moment the conversation between us was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Burton.

"Well, Miss Lee," he said, "I suppose I may take it for granted that Dr. Dunbrook has now told you all."

"All that I know," I said; "but possibly the papers left by him may reveal more."

"Dr. Dunbrook thinks," said Miss Lee, "that when the dead man's affairs are inquired into, I shall be put in possession of a fortune. Have *you* any grounds for thinking so?"

"It is quite possible, but by no means certain," he replied, "I know nothing of the scoundrel's affairs beyond the fact that he bought quite recently an annuity of £600 a year which he was paid through me, and which, of course, terminates with his life."

"Was my father very rich?" asked Miss Lee.

"Fairly so," he answered, "but nothing extraordinary. Unless his assassin economised the fruits of his crime—which I think unlikely—there may be very little left."

In my heart I could not help hoping this would be found to be the case. Till then I had somehow scarcely thought of Miss Lee's fortune at all; and now it presented itself to me for the first time, as a possible bar to my aspirations. To sue for Miss Lee's hand while she was a simple governess did not seem unreasonable; but for a poor doctor to venture upon such a step when she was rich and prosperous was quite another matter. She might, not unnaturally, think that I coveted her fortune and not herself.

"I hope my £120 a year is safe, at all events," said Miss Lee.

"Quite safe," replied Mr. Burton. "That annuity was settled upon your mother and yourself when you were a baby, in such a way that on your mother's death it all went to you. But speaking of your mother, Miss Lee, I have a present for you which I think you will appreciate."

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He thereupon drew out of his pocket a small likeness in water-colours, and handed it to her.

"Is this my mother's likeness?" she asked, eagerly.

"It is," answered Mr. Burton, "I found it in hunting for some important papers which I had somehow mislaid."

"Is it like her?—like what she was?"

"Exactly."

She gazed at it long and earnestly. At last I ventured to ask if I might be favoured with a sight of it. She handed it to me at once.

"Why, Miss Lee," I said, "surely this is *your* likeness."

"Yes," she said, smiling, "since Mr. Burton has kindly given it to me."

"Yes, of course; but you know I don't mean that. Barring the dress and the arrangement of the hair, it is exactly like you in expression, features, everything."

"I thought the likeness would strike you," remarked Mr. Burton.

"That explains what the fellow said once in his delirium!" I exclaimed. "His words, if I recollect aright, were, '*She is his wife, and she thinks herself my daughter!*'"

"Well, I am glad you both find I am like my mother," said Miss Lee.

"Didn't you see the resemblance yourself?" I asked as I handed it back to her.

"I fancied I could detect some," she answered; "but the likeness did not strike me so forcibly as it appears to have done you."

"Ah! that's because you don't often look at yourself in the glass, and probably do not pay much attention to your image there when you do."

"As to that," she replied, "I dare say I am not very different from the generality of my sex. But, gentlemen, I must now leave you. I have my pupils' lessons to attend to. You will kindly let me know when you have examined that wicked man's papers."

"At that ceremony, Miss Lee, you should be present," said Mr. Burton. "I think it ought to be done to-morrow. But I will see you again before then and arrange as to the hour."

"For mercy's sake don't ask me to enter that dreadful room again! Surely *my* presence can be dispensed with. Please don't insist upon it."

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"Very well, Miss Lee," he replied, "Dr. Dunbrook and I will act for you and let you know the result."

"Thank you both very much," she said. "I know my interests are perfectly safe in your hands. In fact I should only be in the way and bother you. If you want me to sign any papers, I can do it afterwards; but not where *he* is. Not there, not there."

CHAPTER VI.

MISS LEE'S DECISION.

THE following day Mr. Burton and I, in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Higgins, as well as of two other witnesses whom I had brought with me, broke the seals and examined into Mr. Lee's affairs. In a small iron box we found £1809, Bank of England notes and sovereigns, with a roll of parchment on which was written as follows:

"I, George H. Lee, request Dr. Dunbrook of 45 High Street, Hilchester, to see that my body is cremated when I die, or, if he finds that impossible, that it is properly embalmed. If he sees that my body is cremated, I bequeath him one thousand pounds sterling of the money which I leave behind me. If it cannot be cremated and he sees that it is properly embalmed, I bequeath him five hundred pounds sterling. Whatever money is left after this bequest to Dr. Dunbrook I desire to be given to my daughter, Constance Louisa Lee, now a governess in the family of Mr. Henderson, 61 Cadogan Street, Hilchester.

"I desire, further, that this box and its contents be committed to the care of Dr. Dunbrook already mentioned, in whom I have the fullest confidence, and who will, I have no doubt, take care that the wishes which I have herein expressed shall be strictly executed.

"GEORGE H. LEE."

There was no date and no signatures of witnesses, so that the document had no legal validity whatever. The deceased had evidently meant it to be his final will and testament; but had put off till too late the disagreeable formalities which were necessary to render it effective.

"Well, Dr. Dunbrook, what do you propose doing now?" asked Mr. Burton afterwards, as our cab rattled through the streets towards his hotel.

"I can propose nothing till I see Miss Lee," I answered.

"And then I suppose you will propose marriage," he said laughing.

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"Wait till we reach the hotel; the cab makes such a confounded noise that we cannot hear each other speak," was my reply.

"I had heard what he had said well enough; but I did not just then feel in the humour to listen to any light badinage about my feelings or intentions towards Miss Lee.

"Dr. Dunbrook," said the lawyer to me, as soon as we were alone in the sitting-room which he had engaged in the hotel, "I fancied that the little joke which I made just now about your proposing to Miss Lee was not quite acceptable to your feelings. If so, I regret it. Let me now speak to you upon the subject with all due seriousness. As matters stand at present I am in a sense Miss Lee's guardian; at all events her trustee, and, yourself alone excepted, her only friend, I believe, in the world. Since I learnt from your own lips that you aspired to her hand, I have—as I think under the circumstances I had a right to do—made inquiries about your antecedents and character, and, I am glad to say, with the most satisfactory results. If therefore you now, or at any future time, propose marriage to her and she accepts you, I think it will be for your mutual happiness; and I shall look upon such an event as a happy *dénouement* to this mysterious and not wholly cleared up villainy. My advice to you is to say nothing about the man's confession, upon which I shall also keep silent. If it were to get wind, Heaven only knows what legal difficulties and complications might spring up to bar Miss Lee from her rightful inheritance! There, there, don't answer me; I know the ways of the law; and I am acting entirely in your interests. I will now go to see Miss Lee, to whom I will say everything that would be likely to dispose her in your favour—without of course hinting at your feelings—and then bring her here. The rest I leave to you. Good-bye," and off he went without even giving me the opportunity to make a reply. The cab which had brought us had, in obedience to his orders, waited for him at the door of the hotel. In that he went; and in that, in less than twenty minutes, he returned with Miss Lee by his side. I had accompanied him to the outer door of the hotel, and was walking backwards and forwards just outside when the cab reappeared.

We all three walked into the private sitting-room already mentioned. We had no sooner entered and sat down than Mr. Burton requested me to explain all matters to Miss Lee in his absence, as he had to go out, and should not be back within half

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an hour at least. To this, I of course, offered no opposition. Miss Lee seemed about to say something, but before she could get it out the lawyer was gone. I understood the motive of his action perfectly, and blessed him in my heart for it. Half an hour was a short space of time for the delicate task before me, but it might prove sufficient if I turned it to good account. I told her briefly (as I wanted to come quickly to other matters) that the deceased had only left £1809. I then gave her his will to read, informing her that it was the only written paper we had found, and that it had no legal value.

This she glanced over hurriedly and carelessly, and then handed back to me.

"It's pretty much as I had expected," she said, with a smile which did not betray a shade of disappointment; "the mighty fortune which I was to inherit is non-existent."

"How do you propose I should act?" I asked. "This will, as I have told you, is valueless: and even if it were otherwise, I have no moral claim to the money which it bequeaths to me. Every farthing of it belongs rightfully to you."

"That may be so or not," she replied, "but I will accept nothing till you have received your due share."

"Then, Miss Lee, you must accept all. Even if the will were valid, I could only claim the sum bequeathed to me on certain conditions; and those conditions I am no longer bound to fulfil."

"You mean about the cremating."

"Yes. When I made that promise to him, I believed him to be an upright and honourable man, and *your father*. A promise obtained under false pretences is no longer binding. Let the wretch be buried and put out of sight as soon as possible."

"As you like. I do not care how you dispose of him; but of the money left, more than half is rightfully yours, and you must take it."

"Well, we will see about that afterwards. Mr. Burton, when he comes, may have something to say in the matter. I now wish to talk to you about something else."

She looked up into my face inquiringly. She evidently had not the remotest suspicion of what was coming. This rather disconcerted me.

"Something quite different from what we have been talking about," I added, feeling my way cautiously, and with a nervous tremor in my voice, which I had not at all calculated upon.

Her quick ear detected this, and her womanly instinct took

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instant alarm. The dark lustrous eyes fixed upon me quivered a little, but she did not withdraw them.

"I am afraid I shall offend you—or, at any rate, pain you," I said.

"I know you would not willingly do either, Dr. Dunbrook."

The tone was soft and gentle, and not without emotion. This encouraged me.

"I understood you to say, Miss Lee, that you had no relatives alive."

"Distant ones whom I have never seen, and who are nothing to me. Mr. Burton, who is no relative, is the only real friend I have in the world."

"Not quite. You promised you would look upon me as another."

"I beg your pardon; so I did. But Mr. Burton is a very *old* friend, while you are—"

"A comparatively young one," I said, gathering courage from her hesitation.

"I was not going to say quite that," she replied. "I was thinking not so much of age as of length of acquaintance. I have known Mr. Burton a much longer time than I have you."

This beating about the bush seemed to be removing me further and further from the point which I wanted to reach. The minutes were passing and the old lawyer might be back before I could unburden my heart of the load which oppressed it. So I made up my mind to take a more direct course.

"Miss Lee," I said, "I am an awkward blunderer and cannot get out what I really want to say. I hope you won't be offended if I tell you that I have ventured to aspire to more than your friendship—that in short," I continued hurriedly and nervously, "I should esteem myself the happiest of men if you would consent to be my wife."

In a moment her face became crimson and her eyes sought the floor.

Was she mortally offended? I could not tell. She remained silent and gave no sign.

"Forgive me," I said, "and end my suspense quickly."

Then she looked up. Her eyes glistened with moisture.

"Don't speak of forgiveness, Dr. Dunbrook," she said, "I feel that you have done me an honour and I thank you. But I was not at all prepared for this and do not know how to answer you.

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I hope you will believe me, when I assure you that I would not willingly give you pain."

My heart sank at those words.

"I know you would not," I replied; "but do let me know the worst. Perhaps your hand is already engaged?"

"No," she said, "it is not."

"Nor your affections?"

"Neither. The thought of marriage—at least as a possibility in my own case—never occurred to me. The stain and mystery hanging over my parentage I always looked upon as an insuperable bar. The stain is now removed and the mystery cleared up, but the feelings natural to my sex, and without which no woman should give her hand in marriage, are, I am afraid, dead through long repression. If I thought it right to marry, there is no man I know to whom I would more willingly entrust my happiness than to yourself; but—it pains me to say it—it cannot be."

She held out her hand to me, while the tears which had been long gathering in her eyes rolled down her cheeks.

* * * * *

What remains I will relate very briefly. Miss Lee upon that occasion refused me—very gently and feelingly, but still decidedly. She was firm upon another point also; she would not accept a penny more than the amount which she considered her share of the money left by the man who had passed himself off as her father.

Mr. Burton's arguments upon the point had no more effect upon her than mine. The deceased's wishes, little as he deserved it, were carried out to the letter. I saw that he was duly cremated, and pocketed the £1000 recompense for this which he had bequeathed to me. The mystery attaching to his identity we did not make public. To have done so would have answered no useful purpose and might have done harm in more ways than one.

Nothing more was heard of the paragraph in the Australian paper which had so alarmed the wretched man's guilty conscience.

To end my story, I have only to add that Miss Lee's refusal was not final. By degrees her resolution never to marry was overcome by my perseverance. The esteem and friendship which she always entertained for me gradually developed into a warmer feeling, and in about a year's time she accepted me as her husband.

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TWO IRISH STORIES.

I.

PHELIM'S PUNISHMENT.

CHAPTER I.

YOU may well say it was pinince, for sorra greater pinince ever Father Reilly ever put an me at home in Ireland ever came up to it! I was thinking in me own mind that whin I came t' London that I'd manage to escape too heavy a pinince wid a sthrange priest; and bedad I must now confess to you, miss, that I'd sooner, any day, have pinince from a reg'lar priest, nor from me masther, Misther Standish Blake.

This is how it was, miss; the Blakes is as poor as any raal ginthry in all Ireland! But they're the raal good ould style, an' no matther whether they can pay for it or not, they always have whatever takes their fancy. Well, shure one day Misther Standish comes t' me in great glee, an' sez he—

"Phelim," sez he, "I've grand news entirely for yeh! yeh know I'm goin' to be a Counsellor?"

"I know, Masther Standish."

"An,'" sez he, "what d'ye think? my uncle Peter is goin' to pay for me to go over and eat my dinners in London."

"More power to him," sez I; "but couldn't yeh get a good dinner in Ireland?"

"Yeh don' undherstand it," he sez, "it's a way ov sayin' that I'm goin' to be med a barrister, or, as we call it here, a counsellor. So I'm goin' over to London, an' as my uncle wants me to do the thing in grand style, an' to be a credit to the blood of the Blakes, he says he'll pay for a servant for me, so I want to know if you'll come with me."

"Never say it twict, sir," sez I, an' bedad! me heart was up in me hat at the thought at goin' to London!

I wint home, an' I tould the ould mother, an' I proomised to

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sind her the rint home be every gale day, an' while we war talkin' who comes in but purty Biddy Cassidy. Now, Biddy an' me was pullin' a coard for a while past, an' whin I seen her come in wid her purty face an' her purty figure—I felt she was the brakin's ov me heart entirely, an' that I'd be very sorry to lave her.

"Did yeh hear the grand news, Biddy?" sez me mother. "Shure, Phelim's goin' off t' London, wid Masther Standish! Why, he'll come back such a gintleman, an' be spakin' such beautofil English that we won't know him!"

"Whisht, now, mother," sez I, for I seen Biddy get a bit pale, an' she said nothing, "I'm not such a haythen Turk as to forget me own people! I'll come back just the same, barrin' dacint clothes, an' a few pounds in me pocket!"

I walked home wid Biddy, an' just as were at the stile near her father's boreen I put me arm round her waist an,' sez I—

Come I won't tell what I said, or what she said, but anyhow we understood aich other, an' she promised she wouldn't look at a boy while I was away, an' I proomised I wouldn't look at a girl, no more nor Saint Kevin did; and afther a little comfortable coorting, I left her at the doore.

Over Misther Standish an' me kem to London: an' a fine town it is for the size ov it! why it's as big as twinty Galways, or tin Dublins. But it's not as sociable as Ireland. Sorra a fair or a dacint wake in the whole av it! An' the quare way the people have av livin' in some parts av it! There's what they call "Flats," where a whole lot av people live in the same big house. Me and Misther Standish had a little bit av a flat—but bedad! little as it was there's many's the big bit av fun there used to be in it! Misther Standish, too, hired a dacint woman, that was a grand cook, her name was "Emma," but as impident as the devil! She an' me couldn't get on at all. She was always abusin' the Irish, an' me blood used to get up whin she'd been too inquisitive about Misther Standish's income. Misther Standish used to give me many a good scoldin' for noot keepin' a still tongue in me head; an' wan day he tould me that if I sed wan word about the ould tumble-down Castle at home at Bally-bogna-slatthery, that he'd pay me passage an' sind me back that day!

In the next flat to us—it was twict as big as ours—there lived wan Colonel Norton an' his purty daughter. Av coorse, like the thrue Irishman he was, Masther Standish had an eye for a purty girl, an' he an' Miss Norton got to be grate friends. The ould

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Colonel didn't keep a man, an' sometimes, he used t' get me to polish up his ould acouthrements for him; an' thin—I think he seen what was goin' on betchune his daughter an' Misther Standish—he used to be askin' me what soart av a place Bally-bogna-slatthery Castle was, an' I used to swear there wasn't the like av it in England, estate, tinnints an' all—huntin' an' fishin' bawns an' boreens,—an' shure I tould no lie to him when I said yeh wouldn't match it in England.

But somehow or other, I must have said something I didn't mean t' say—without thinkin', av coorse—for wan evenin' Misther Standish comes in afther bein' at the Colonel's, an' he was in a thunderin' passion.

"Tell me," he sez, "what was it yeh were tellin' the Colonel about Bally-bogna-slatthery?"

"Praised it up to the skies!" sez I.

"Aye," sez he, "did you ever hear av anything bein' so praised that people become suspicious about it? That's what you've done. Now keep your tongue more between yer teeth the next time the Colonel comes askin' yeh questions."

The next moment Misther Standish got a lot av letthers—he was always gittin' letthers—an' whin he read one av thim he jumped up an' gev a "Tally-ho" that ye'd think the Red Rover was in sight an' the hounds in full cry after him.

"Arrah," sez I, "what's the matther?"

"Matther," sez he, "why, only that—but no," he sez, stoppin' short, "if I tould yeh, an' the ould Colonel got hould av yeh, yeh couldn't hould that onaisy tongue av yours, an' I want to be the wan to tell the first av the good news meself."

"'Pon my conscience, Misther Standish," sez I, "I won't tell any wan if you'll only tell me the good news. Shure, who has a betther right t'know it first nor wan of yer own?" I was dyin' av curiosity!

"Well, here's for it," he sez. "We've won the lawsuit that was goin' on for years, an I've come in for the Knockmafad Estate."

Yeh might have knocked me down with a feather! But the next minute I gave a "View Halloo" aiqual to Misther Standish's 'Tally-ho," for the Knockmafad Estate was the finest in the County Mayo.

"Hould yer tongue, yeh omadhaun! some wan 'll hear yeh an' think I'm horsewhippin' yeh, may be."

"Sorra hair I care, Sir! An' how soon will we be goin' back to the ould counthry?"

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"How the divil can I tell?" he sez; "I've to go down now to Lincoln's Inn to see Twistem and Tapean about it."

"Mayn't I tell Emma about it, sir?" sez I; "for faith, I think I'll go out av me skin wid joy."

"No!" he roars at me. "Don't say a word to any wan. Here give me a dhrop av that poteen that's in the canteen. Take a dhrop yerself, Phelim," he sez, "an' see here," he sez, laughin', "I'm afraid yeh can't keep a still tongue in your head, so to get off the steam, if any wan comes in while I'm away—(mind yeh don't leave this room)—an' asks yeh a question, say nothin', but 'The real unlicensed, unchristened Irish dew—Poteen, that never blushed at the sight of a gauger.' Mind you put it up, and don't make a beast of yourself dhrinkin' any more," an' off he wint.

However, I knew Misther Standish was the right soart, an' that he wouldn't mind me takin' another thimbleful to wish good luck to us both, an' just as I was takin' it, who comes in but Emma, with her bonnet an' shawl on. I med haste an' locked up the poteen, an' she sez very cute:

"What's that yer lockin' up, Phelim?"

"The raal unlicensed, unchristened Irish dew, that never blushed at the sight of a gauger—Poteen!"

"Well," sez she wid a sniff—I think she thought she'd get a dhrop av the precious liquor—"I hope you an' your master had it airley enough in the mornin'. I'm goin' out to market, so stay here, if any wan should call, to open the door." An' away wint Emma.

CHAPTER II.

There was wan thing an' another to be done. I had to brush Misther Standish's clothes, an' see afther his evening dress-shirt, an' I was thinkin' av goin' out to "The Barristher's Arms" for a pot of stout an' mild, whin I seen Emma commin' across the sthreet, an' some sthrange girl runnin' afther her. May I never sin, but it's as thrue as that God med little apples, an' that Eve ate them, whin I say, that the sight nearly left me eyes whin I saw that the girsha was—the divil a wan else—but Biddy Cassidy!

I was av course just goin' to run down an' to welcome Biddy, for I was in that state of flusthration I didn't know what t' do. What cud bring Biddy t' London at all? I cudn't make head

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nor tail av it; so I was boultin' down the stairs—whin! all av a suddint—I bethought av the pinince Misther Standish put on me!

I run back into the room, lavin' the doore wide open; bedad I hurd them comin' up the stairs, an' och! the curse av Moll Kelly light an' her, I hurd Emma sayin'—

"There's the door open, so I suppose either Misther Blake or his man is in."

In the name of every Saint that ever wore a crown o' glory what was I t' do? I wouldn't brake me word t' Misther Standish, an' here was Biddy near in the room wid me. I known that if I seen her it was all over wid me, for she was the brakin's of me heart intirely; why, I was that fond av her that I'd live on the clippin's av tin wid her, an' think it very nourishing to the heart at the same time. But, as I said, they were near in the room, so I looked round t' see if I cud hide anywhere, an' bedad the only place was anundher the table, an' it was covered wid an illigant big green baize cloth! Down I wint on me hands an' knees, an' crawled anundher the table. I was hardly anundher it, whin I hurd Emma sayin'—

"There's no wan there! but as the door's open Phelim can't be far away."

"Och," sez poor innocent Bridget, "I wondher his own heart doesn't tell him I'm in London!"

"All the leedies does seem very fond av Phelim," sez Emma, wid a soart av a sniff. "He's a very agreeable man intirely; indeed, he makes love to every girl he come across!"

Now that was as big a lie as ever Emma let out av her, an that's sayin' a good dale. I was very near brakin' through me pinince, only she wint away, an' banged the doore, an' there I was anundher the table, an' not able to say wan word t' the girl of me heart, an' she only a few feet away from me. All at wanst she began t' talk to herself. She was lonely, the cratheer, an' its a relief to a woman t' keep her tongue graised, in case she'd want t' use it all av a suddint an' the words mightn't come handy; an' she says—

"Throth! it's a grand room all out! Sofas, an' arm-chairs, an' books, an' pictures, an' a piano, an' all soarts av grandheur och-hone! Sure, it's no wonder Phelim forgot me among all these grand things! It's a mighty differ betchune where he is now, an' where he kem from!" an' sez I in me own mind—

"Right yeh are, Biddy, for I never was put anundher a table t' do pinince in the whole coorse av me life afore!"

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"That's a fine bit av flannel," sez Biddy afther a bit, an' I was wondherin' where was the flannen, for the sorra bit I knewn av in the whole place but some flannen cricket-shirts av Misther Standish's, an' his vests, an' me own two coloured shirts.

"It's a purty bit, entirely," sez Biddy, an' I hurd her comin' over to the table, an' what d'ye think, but she takes a hoult av the green cover that was on it, an' as she does so she gives a screech, for I was so flusthered I cudn't help movin' me legs, an' out they stuck beyant the ind av the table. In a jiffy she whipped up the cloth, an' why—there I was!

"Phelim!" she schreeches wid joy, an' clappin' her hands, "Phelim, avick! an' didn't yeh know I was here? an' why didn't yeh come to me? Och! Phelim! what's the matter? Why are yeh shuttin' your eyes up tight that a-way? Aw why don't yeh come up out av that?"

I was near gone mad at not knowin' what to do. I opened the corner av me eye an' looked up; but I shut it up quick enough agin, for Biddy looked that purty!

"What brought yeh there?" she sez; but the sorra word I said.

"What brought yeh there anundher the table," she schreeches, she was that wild.

"What's the matter?" sez Emma, comin' runnin' in from hearing the schreech. "Oh!"—whin she seen me, lyin' on the broad of me back wid me eyes shut—"is that the state he's in this hour av the morning?"

"Shure he's not drunk?" sez Bridget in a fright.

"Don't ye see he is," said that sarpint Emma—yeh see I wouldn't be coortin' her at all, an' she was that mad! "What brings yeh lyin' there?"

I felt I'd burst av I didn't say something, so I remimbered what Mister Standish tould me t'say whin I found I had to say something, so I ses—

"The raal, unlicensed, unchristened Irish dew, that never blushed at the sight of a gauger—Poteen!"

"He's dhrunk!" sez Emma, givin' me the weight of her heavy fut an' me shins.

"He's not," sez Bridget, the darlin' standin' up for me.

"He is," sez Emma. "But I'll know what I'll do—I'll call the Colonel."

Away she goes, an' poor Bridget sits down on the carpet, an' looks at me wid all the eyes she had, an' bursts out cryin'.

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"Oh, Phelim! Phelim! that ever I'd see this day! To come all the way from Bally-bogna-slatthery an' to find you makin' suchna baste av yourself! Can yeh even stand up?"

I wanted to show I wasn't quite overtook altogether, so I jumped up, an' she jumped up too, an' med a grab at me. But I was too quick for her, an' I put the table betchune us, the very minute that Emma, an' the Colonel, an' his purty daughter kem into the room.

"Come, come! what's this all about?" says the ould Colonel. "My good man, how does it happen you are found in Mr. Blake's rooms under such very mysterious circumstances; explain yourself!"

I wanted to tell him that I'd do so wid all the veins av me heart, only I cudn't bekase av the pinince. So I shook me head an' I opened me mouth, an' I pinted down my throat wid me finger.

"What is the reason you cannot speak to us?" sez the purty young lady. She looked that disthressed that as I always had a soft spot in me heart for the women, I felt I had to spake, an' make her mind aisy, so I sez—

"The raal, unlicensed, unchristened Irish dew, that never blushed at the sight av a gauger—Poteen!"

"What is Poteen?" sez the poor innocent, ignorant young crathur.

"Whisky, miss," sez Biddy. "Whisky that does be med unknownst, an' I suppose Misther Standish, like the 'cute boy he is, got hoult av some! I wouldn't wondher if they had it for breakfast instid av tay or good nathral stirabout an' milk—had yeh, ye drunken omadhaun?" sez Biddy in a passion, an' stampin' her foot at me.

"The raal, unlicensed, unchristened Irish dew, that never blushed at the sight av a gauger—Poteen!"

"I don't believe a word of it," sed the purty young lady; "but"—an' she turns an' looks at Biddy very sharp—"my good girl, who are you?"

"Yes! Yes!" sez the ould Colonel, "you are a very mysterious person—we have never seen you before; where have you come from?"

"Come, now, me ould gintleman," sez Bridget, feeling the blood av the Cassidys risin' ithin her, "don't call me names! I won't stand it! Aw only knows Phelim there is blind drunk—yeh are!" she shouts, bekase I nodded me head—"yeh know yeh

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are! 'An only yeh are yeh wouldn't stand by an' hear me called bad names—ah! it's not Barney Egan that's in it! He's the boy that 'ud put daylight athrough any wan that 'ud call me bad names."

"My father only said you were a mysterious person," sed the purty young lady, "and we must continue to think so until we know who you are."

"I'm not ashamed av who I am or where I kem from," sez Biddy. "I'm a poor orphint girl from hust wan side av Bally-bogna-slatthery near the Blake's Castle."

"Oh!" sez the old gintleman; "then you can tell us about Mr. Blake's castle in Ireland."

"Shure it's a quare soart oav a castle it is," sez Bridget; "shure the half of the windys is boorded up, an' the Blakes haven't as much as 'ud jingle an' a mile stone. I say," an' she shouted at me agin, "may be yeh can tell us where Misther Standish does get the money for all the grandeur I see here."

"Constance," sez the ould Colonel, "I am beginning to think there is a good deal of truth in what this very intelligent woman says, and——"

"There now," sez Biddy again, "there's more av yer names! I tell yeh, Phelim, it's not Barney Egan that 'ud stand by an' hear me belied an' called names. Och! Why was I foolish—why didn't I stay at home wid him, an' he now wid five stall-feds, an' a sow and nine boneens that yeh wouldn't see the match av thim in the counthry!"

Red-headed Barney Egan! To think Bridget 'ud think av him for a minnit was enough to make me forget me promise to Misther Standish.

"I kem over," sez Biddy, "bekase me poor father—God rest his sowl!—was berried last Sunday was three weeks. An' whin he was dyin' sez he to me, an' Father Valley was listenin', 'Bridget,' sez he, 'whin I'm gone, you'll have no wan to look afther yeh; an' that's a bad thing for a young girl. So—as I know you and Phelim is pullin' a coard, an' he's a dacint boy, just sell the few bits av things, an' there's seven pound tin and fourpence in the tick anundher me—right in the middle av the chaff,'—yeh see what a clivir soart av a man me poor father was—'so take it all, an' go to London, an' Phelim is not the boy he was if he doesn't marry yeh off hand.' So after the funeral—an' a fine wake we had! there wasn't a nicer funeral in the place for many a day—I did what the poor father tould me; and now whin I come I find

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Phelim blind drunk! an' oh, I'm the unfortunate girl! I'll go straight home in the next cattle-boat, for that'll be cheaper, an' I'll marry Barney Egan—so I will!"

I was near mad whin the door was opened, an' in walks Misther Standish; an' he looks first at wan an' then at another, an' he sez in a wondher—

"What the mischief is the matter?"

"Matter enough!" sez the ould Colonel. "This woman has come from your part of the country and she has been telling us some very extraordinary things respecting your family residence, Mr. Blake."

"What!" exclaims Misther Standish. "By all that's beautiful, an that's herself, if this isn't Biddy Cassidy from Ballybogna-slattery!"

"Yes, it's me, Misther Standish; I kem all the way from Ireland in a cattle-boat afther me poor ould father died, to look for Phelim, an' now I find him dead drunk, and not able to say anything, but something about Poteen."

Misther Standish looked at me: an' I looked at Misther Standish, and we both roared laughin'.

Then Misther Standish puts his arm round Biddy and he gives her a good kiss, an' he pushes her over t' me, an' thin tells all about why he put the pininee on me, an' sez he—

"I've got it at last! Old Twistem an' Tapean have the business nearly settled, and, please God, we'll all meet next Christmas in dear old Ireland."

"Hurrah!" sez I, an' it was the first word I said afther Misther Standish's pininee on me. "Hurrah! we'll have a double weddin' for——"

"Phelim," sez Master Standish, "hold your tongue!"

"I will, sir, afther I say this; that 'pon me conscience Bridget is the gainer by me pininee to the last day av her life. I often hear it said that women oughtn't t' be let talk so much, but, bedad! it's such a terrible thing to have to keep one's tongue quiet an' one burstin' to talk, that she may give me the lingth and breadth av her tongue every night, noon, an' morning, an' the sorra bit av me cud have the heart, t' say a word agin it. Ah, no! as the blessed Saint Patrick said in wan av his sarmons, 'A fellow feeling' makes us powerful kind,' and thim's me own feelins down to the ground."

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II.

SAINT PATRICK'S PENANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THERE are a good many steps to mount up before you get to the top of the ruined belfry of the once famous Abbey on the Hill of Slane in the County Meath. Many a time in days gone by have we toiled up the narrow spiral stone steps; but then, having reached the summit, what a landscape lies before the beholder! Round the base of the belfry lies the churchyard, with its humble graves, rude headstones, and old, grey flat tombstones; amongst them being one of brass, said to have been placed over the tomb of Slanius, a foreign prince who came over and settled in Meath and from whom the village of Slane takes it name. Another legend says it is the tomb of a French prince who had been sent over to be educated by the pious and learned monks of Slane Priory. The landscape, with its vivid green pasturage and occasional woods, slopes gently down to where the picturesque little village lies almost embowered in trees. Thence it slopes downwards again until the valley of the "beauteous and silvery" Boyne is reached; and by the side of the Boyne are the ruins of the once famous Hermitage of Saint Erc. The latter, in the ancient annals of Ireland, is called "The sweet-spoken judge." He was the first Bishop of Slane, and was consecrated by Saint Patrick, who thus eulogises him in the following strain—

BISHOP ERC.

"Everything he adjudged was just,
Every one that passes a just judgment
Shall receive the blessing of Saint Erc."

Saint Erc was the nephew of Saint Patrick, and the latter is said to have often stayed at the Hermitage. Be that as it may, there is certainly a tradition that, at all events, he stayed there upon one occasion, and crossed the river on Christmas Day to celebrate mass for the monks of Fennor.

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A more sleepy, superstition-ridden place than Slane is, it would be difficult to find in the three Kingdoms. The efficacy of water from holy wells and the belief in charms are articles of faith in the district. Many a "pattern" and "station" have we witnessed at the Holy Well of Slane, which is situated in the greensward, just beside the Hermitage of Saint Erc, where lies the scene of our story.

At the opposite side of the Boyne, right in view of the Hermitage, there stands, or stood, in my early days, a small comfortable cabin, tenanted by Lukey Maguire, the lock-keeper of the canal. His wife, Peggy Maguire, was a bustling 'sonsy woman, with a sharp tongue and a very good notion of using it; whereas Lukey was a gaunt, lanky man, rather taciturn, save when a glass of whisky inspired him. Under the influence of the spirit it was his great delight at such times to gather around him an audience seated upon the arms of the lock, and there to dilate upon the ancient grandeur of the three monasteries of Slane, viz., the one on the Hill, the Hermitage of Saint Erc, and the old Abbey of Fennor; the latter being situated upon a gently-sloping green eminence to the right of Lukey's cottage.

It was Saint Patrick's Day, and Lukey had just closed the lock, after having admitted into its friendly haven a lighter from Drogheda laden with coal; for in such wise was our fuel provided, save when we could procure turf from the neighbouring bog of Horsestown below the Castle Road. Lukey and the two lightermen sat upon the arms of the lock, smoking the pipe of peace in company with Joe Wetheral, the miller, and Peter Nady, the priest's boy. The society of the latter was much sought after at rural gatherings, for Peter could serve Mass in Latin—which, by the way, he did not understand—and was generally considered grand company.

"D'ye mane t' tell me up to me face that Saint Patherick never was stayin' at the Hermitage down there!" exclaimed Peter Nady menacingly, addressing the miller, who had presumed to cast a doubt upon the tradition.

"Now, aisy, Peter! Shure no one could tell for sartin—I don't suppose there was directheries in them days!"

"Arrah, men dear! an' what are ye fightin' about?" inquired Mrs. Maguire, making her appearance at the door of the cottage, followed by Mrs. Wetheral, who had come over with her husband in order to have a friendly gossip.

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"No fightin' at all, Mrs. Maguire, only I'm tellin' Peter that how can he say for sartin' that Saint Patherick ever was stayin' up at the ould Hermitage there beyant wid Saint Erc."

"See here, now," interposed Peter Nady, "Lukey is in the right av it; an' only I don't want t' take the wind out of his sails, an' t' tell the story meself, I'd tell you a raal thrue story that his Rivirence sez might or might not be thrue."

"Oh! bedad! Pether, let us have it!' exclaimed Lukey affably, "shure I can tell yeh *my* story afther."

"I'll tell you what you'll all do," advised Mrs. Maguire. "It's beginnin' to feel cowld now, so come in, there's a roarin' fire within, an' have a glass of somethin' comfortable, an Pether 'll tell us the story—for throth! I'd like meself t' hear it."

Soon they were all seated around the comfortable hearth, Peter being accommodated with the seat of honour upon the settle-bed in the warmest corner near the fire. The company were supplied with punch, which, as glasses were conspicuous by their absence, they drank from tea-cups or egg-cups or any other receptacle which came handy.

"Now, Pether," said Mrs. Maguire, "let us have the story. But first fill up yer cup, man—talkin's dhry work."

"I will, ma'am," and Peter's cup having been replenished with a stiff glass of punch, he commenced as follows:—

"Well—nabours—yeh must know that wan Christmas whin Saint Erc was livin' up there at the Hermitage he was asked t' go an' give the rites to a poor woman that was dyin' up there near Ardmulchan. As good luck would have it, who was stayin' on a visit wid him that very Christmas but his uncle Saint Patherick!"

"'Yeh must go, av coorse,' says Saint Patherick, 'an' as yeh promised t' go an' say airly Mass there beyant at Fennor, I'll go meself instead of yeh.'

"The next mornin' they were up airly, for Saint Patherick wanted to say a mouthful av prayers himself afore he wint to sarve Mass. Well Saint Erc had a boy—the same as it might be meself, yeh know—an' this boy—his name was Barney—used to sarve Mass. So Saint Patherick wint down to the kitchin to call him, an'—sorra lie I'm tillin—whin I say he saw the fellow makin' a mortial heavy breakfast av oaten male stirabout an' buttermilk.

"'Yeh gluttonous abnormal son av a woman!' says the Saint in a tarin' passion, 'don't yeh know yeh ought to sarve Mass on

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an empty stomach! I can't take yeh wid me now! So just stay here until I come back, an' keep sayin' all the prayers yeh know, or the sorra bit of roast goose will yeh git on this blessed Christmas Day!'

"'Aw! yer Rivirince,' he roars out, 'don't say yeh won't take me acrass in the corracle * wid yeh! Shure what 'd the nabours say av yeh hadn't yer own boy wid yeh?'

"'I don' care for what any one sez,' sez the Saint, 'I only think av doin' me duty; so here yeh stay, an' what's more, I'll put a pinince an' yeh, so don't spake t' any one that comes to the doore while I'm away, but get the dinner ready, an' av yeh break the pinince, I'll root yeh be the side av the Boyne an' every hair on yer head'll grow into a bulrush;' an' wid that Saint Patherick struck his mithre on his head, and tuk his crozier in his hand an' banged the doore afther him, an' aff he wint to the corracle that was waitin' at the side of the Boyne.

"Saint Patherick was a little bit flusthered, an' he wasn't thinkin' what he was doin', so his foot slipped as he was gettin' into the corracle an' he fell into the Boyne: an' his mithre floated wan way, an' his crozier the other way, an' there he was roarin' 'Miwiellia murdher,' an' at last he managed to ketch them, an' he wint back to the Hermitage an' got dhry vestments, for he was all wet wid th' wather.

"Av coorse, all this delay goin' backwards an' forwards med Saint Patherick late, an' what was his wonderment whin he got to the chapel, but to see that no wan tuk a bit av notice av him, or gev him the time av day:—an' the sight nearly left his eyes when he saw some one—the very moral av himself—sayin' Mass at the althar! He was put out for a minit, but sure enough, he seen how it all was! So, puttin' his hand in his pocket he pulls out an ould soda-water bottle full av holy wather from his own holy well, an' he walks up th' chapel an' he throws it over the chap at the althar!

"Well, bedad! There was such a ruction as yeh never heerd tell av! Saint Patherick was the cutest Saint goin' them days: an' the minit he threwn the holy wather over the fellow, he gev a schreech that yeh cud hear all over the parish, an' his horns grew up an' his tail grew down, an' he vanished in a flash of lightenin'—for not a lie I'm tellin' whin I say that it was the

* A wicker boat covered with hide. There is one of these primitive boats in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

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Divil, that's always on the look-out to circumnambulate every one—that purtinded to be the Saint!

"The whole congregation was frightened, for the Divil gev them his blessin', an' we know the Divil's blessin' always turns to a curse! but Saint Patherick towld them not to be onaisy, for, sez he, 'his curse nor his blessin' wouldn't do yeh any good nor harm, for, yeh see, he hasn't the unction.'"

CHAPTER II.

"Well, whin Mass was over, Saint Patherick thought he might as well be gettin' back to the Hermitage, for he was beginnin' to feel a bit hungry; an' afther wishin' every one a Happy Christmas, off he goes down to where the corracle was waitin' for him be the side av the river. Just as the Saint was steppin' into the corracle he heerd a schreech, an' av coorse it was only nathral for him to look round, an' there on the bank he saw standin' wan av the purtiest little girshas that ever yeh seen! She had blue eyes, an' long goold curls, an' the purtiest, weeniest, whitest little feet ever yeh seen, an afore the Saint had time to say wan word to her she calls out:

"'Oh, Saint dear, I've run all the way from the chapel afther yeh an' I thought I'd never catch yeh! Won't yeh take me acrass the Boyne wid yeh in yer corracle?'

"The Saint was regular flusthered, an' he didn't know what t' think at all. All at wanst it kem into his mind that it was the Divil himself again that kem in a new shape; an' he rimimbered how the Divil bamboozled even Saint Anthony, so he sez:

"'Be aff now, me ould gintleman, I seen enough av yer goin's on to-day. Don't think I'm goin' to be taken in again by yeh! Begone now,' and he was pushin' the corracle away from the bank, whin she stooped down and caught hoult av it, an' bedad! in she jumped!

"Bedad, the Saint didn't know what t' do. She sat down an' she sez:

"'Don't turn me out, Saint dear. I want to go over an' see a poor craythur there beyant that's in a desp'rate way.'

"'What!' sez the Saint, for he was very soft-hearted. 'D' ye want t' go t' see any one that's very bad?'

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"'Yeh never said a thruer word, Saint dear! the crathur is bad, very bad, an' I'm the only wan in the world that can do the craythur any good.'

"'Well, that's quare; I don't know av any wan near us bein' very bad, exceptin' Flan Mor's wife, an' she got the sacrimints this mornin'.'

"'Oh, it isn't her, Saint, dear. But here we are at the bank, and throth I'm hungry.'

"Here the poor Saint was in another puzzle. It was agin the rule to let a woman into the Hermitage, an' here was as purty a girl as yeh cud see, thinkin', maybe, that she'd be axed t' stay an' have her dinner.

"'We don't let wimin into the Monasthery,' he sez, thryin' to keep from lookin' at her purty blue eyes, for he rimimbered how Kathleen had put the comedher upon a comrade saint av his in the County Wicklow, be the name av Saint Kivin. 'However,' he sez, as he tied the corracle wid a suggan* to the stump av an ould three, 'just come up an' wait outside av the gate, an' I'll see what can be done.'

"Well, now, it was quare, but Saint Patherick didn't like to tell any av the monks about his havin' brought a purty girl acrass the Boyne wid him in his corracle, an' at the same time he wanted t' give her something to ait. Ould Brother Dominic was the head cook, an' he thought av tellin' him, for he minded that the very last time Brother Dominic kem t' confession t' him that he tould him—well, I'm not right in saying anything about it—I'll only say this, that Saint Patherick didn't care to put temptation in Brother Dominic's way, an' just as he was thinkin' in his own mind about it, who does he come across but Barney!

"For a minnit the Saint forgot the pinince he put an poor Barney; an' the next minnit he thought that if he tuk aff the pinince, an' got Barney t' help him about the purty girl, that he'd just keep his tongue in his cheek an' not go gossipin' about her, so he goes t' him an he sez:

"'Barney,' sez Saint Patherick, 'yer not good for much, but maybe yeh can help a poor craythur that's in desp'rate trouble; an' if you can, I'll let yeh aff the pinince. But, whisht now!' he sez, for Barney was cuttin' a caper wid delight, 'I must tell yeh all about it; it's a serious business,' sez he, 'for the crather is—a woman!'

* Suggan—a hay rope.

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"Well, Barney listened wid all the ears he had, but av coorse he cud say nothin'.

"'The craythur follied the corracle,' sez Saint Patherick, 'an it was only a Christian act for me t' take her in, an' take her acrass the Boyne, for she said she wanted t' come an' see a poor craythur that was dyin'. Now, d' you know any wan that's in ridiculous morbis this minute? Yis, yeh may answer the question.'

"'I don't, yer Rivirince—I never heerd av such a disaise,' sez Barney; 'ould Brother Festus has Saint Anthony's fire in his face: an' three childher there beyant at Higgins Town has the mazles, but I haven't heerd av anywan havin' ridiculus morbis.'

"'Yeh omadhaun!' shouts Saint Patherick—for I heerd that for all he *was* a Saint, he had a short timper—'have yeh been sarvin' Latin all this time an' don't know that ridiculus morbis* manes in the article of death—dyin'?'

"'I don't know anywan, yer Rivirince. It's a fine healthy saison—God bless it!'

"'It's a poor parish can't afford a clerk, so I say amen to that!' sez the Saint; 'but bedad things is very bad, there's no burial fees, nor marriage dues, nor nothin' goin' on. However, I lift that poor craythur av a woman outside the gates, an' as I see it's comin' on t' rain, yeh might ask her in t' sit in the porch, an' give her somethin' t' ait, an' find out from her who this poor dyin' crathur is.'

"Well, me brave Barney, nothin' loth, wint aff, an' Saint Patherick sat down to his writin', for the monks used to do a lot av writin' in them days, for printin' wasn't chape like it is now. He had a little bell on the table beside him, an' more—betoken that very bell † is in a curiosity place now—so wondherin' that Barney didn't come t' consult him about the wine for dinner—for he kept the kay av the cellar himself—Saint Patherick rang the bell, but no Barney came. The Saint rang it again:—he rang it the third time—but no Barney appeared.

"Bedad, the Saint cudn't think what was the matther! Barney never disobeyed that bell before: an' the Saint knew there wasn't another bell within the baw av an ass, so sez he t' himself:—

* Probably the Saint meant *in articulo mortis*.—ED.

† Saint Patrick's Bell, with its old leathern covering, is in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. Saint Patrick is said to have cast it himself for the purpose of warding off evil spirits.

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"'I'll just put the finishin' touches to Saint Pether's breeches, an' begin a new crown for King Solomon: an' then I'll look afther Barney.'

"The good Saint was so busy that he didn't feel the time passin': an' then he began to feel mortial hungry. At the same time he found himself thinkin' about that purty girl, an' he kept wondherin' if Barney found out who was the poor sick crathur she kem acrass the Boyne to see. An' then the Saint rang the bell again, an' shure it was enough t' vex even a Saint whin no Barney med his appearance!

"Up gets Saint Patherick an' down he goes to the kitchen; but the sorra wan was there but two lay brothers: wan av them was lardin' a turkey an' the other was washin' the cabbage; but the divil a bit av Barney was to be seen.

"'Where's that thief av the world, Barney?' sez Saint Patherick.

"'He was here about two hours ago,' sez ould Brother Pontifactus, he that was washin' the cabbage.

"'Yes!' sez Brother Diaphrogmatus, that was lardin' the turkey, 'an' he wint aff wid the best part av a pig's cheek an' a roast paycock; an' he had a flask av claret stickin' out av the back pocket av his frieze coat!'

"'Thunder an' turf!' schreeches Saint Patherick, 'how did the fellow get the kay av the cellar?'

"'I don't know,' sez Brother Pontifactus; 'but I looked out an' saw him goin' round to the porch at the hall-doore.'

"Quiet and aisy, off goes the Saint; he was walkin' on the grass, so no one could hear his footsteps, an' he stopped short an' listened, for he heard Barney's voice, an' here's what he was sayin':—

"'Don't be afeared, acushla! Shure I'd live on the clippings av tin wid yeh.'

"'But, Barney,' sez some one else, 'I can't help being afeared av Saint Patherick.'

"'Afeared av Saint Patherick!' an' Barney gev a laugh. 'Why, the Saint's the softest-hearted craythur alive!'

"'Yis—I thought he looked soft; he wouldn't have tuk me over in the corracle if he wasn't.'

"'Yeh managed it grand!' sez Barney.

"The Saint wouldn't wait t' hear any more. His few grey hairs round his shaven crown were bristlin' up; he walks round, an' there was Barney wid his arm round the purty girl, an' the

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flask of claret in the other. The purty girl jumped up an' giv such a schreech that ye'd hear all over the parish.

"'Barney,' sez the Saint, 'I didn't expect ever to see this day.'

"'Didn't yeh, yer Rivirince?' sez Barney. 'I find it a mighty pleasant one.'

"'An' you,' says the Saint, turnin' to the purty girl, 'what's your name?'

"'Sheelah!' she sez.

"'Well—Sheelah!—why did yeh tell me a lie this mornin'?'

"'Me till yer Rivirince a lie!' she sez; 'I'd scorn it!'

"'Didn't yeh say yeh war comin' over to see a poor dyin' craythur?' he sez.

"'So I was,' she sez, wid a blush all over her face. 'Didn't I want t' come t' see Barney—an' he's always sayin' he's dyin' av love for me!'

"The Saint looked very hard at the pair av them for a minute, an' thin he said:—

"'Barney, I tuk aff yer pinince this mornin', an' as punishment for playing off a thrick on me, I'll put pinince for life on the pair av yez. Come up to the chapel, an' sind for Brother Anthony to give the bride away!'

"So there's me story for yeh," concluded Peter, "an' whin his Rivirince up there in Slane is goin' t' marry a couple, he always sez to me in a jokin' way:—

"'Pether, I'm goin' to put Saint Patherick's pinince upon a couple!'"

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BEGUN IN JEST.

BY MRS. NEWMAN.

AUTHOR OF "HER WILL AND HER WAY," "WITH COSTS," "THE LAST OF THE HADDONS," &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

HER LEGACY.

THE next morning Aubyn turned over his letters as soon as they arrived in search of the expected one from Gerard. It was there with the rest; and, on hurriedly opening it, he found a few lines of hearty farewell, and a word or two to the effect that he left Dorothy, Mabel, and their aunt to Aubyn's care, assured that he would do the best for them. "I hope soon to hear the step has been taken, which will strengthen the bond and give Mabel a brother. I have made up my mind to travel for a year or two, at least; and I hope you will all pardon my having said nothing about my intention. You know me, and you know that, having once made up my mind, no amount of good-natured attempts to make me change it would be of any avail. It is the fear that such attempts would be made, which has caused me to shirk the good-byes, except by letter. I am off to-night to Southampton, where I join the *Elora*, in which I have taken my passage for New York, on my way to California."

Gone already! Gone for an indefinite time, and without a word as to his reason for going! What did it mean? Aubyn sat for a few minutes trying to understand what could have brought about so complete a separation between Mabel and Harcourt as this seemed to imply. What had come between them? Was it possible that the story about Lucy May had reached her? No, not that, or not that only—it would not be like Mabel to believe it. But presently he began to argue himself into a more agreeable frame of mind. The situation was not so hopeless, after all. It might only amount to a short sea-passage, a telegram, and a return. Yes; that would probably be all, when Mabel had time to reflect.

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Carelessly turning over his other letters, his eyes lighted upon one, the handwriting of which was familiar to him. Bloggs! He took it up, and opened the envelope.

"HONOURED SIR,—

"I write this to thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for all that you've done, and meant to be a doin' for me. You took me by the hand when ne'er another would. You bore with me, and was kind, when you was sufferin' from my cowardly violence; and God knows I meant to give my life to you, to do what you liked with. I think you see how I was a trying, and putting my heart into it, as you said. But it's all over now, sir; don't you never trouble no more about me, for it's all over. Lucy May has been took from her home by a villain—yes, a villain, though he's your friend. I followed 'em up, and went by the same train, jumping in the last minute, and, as soon as we got to London, I took her away from him. If he'd agreed to marry her, as soon as the license could be got, and let her be watched over till then, I would have give her up, to keep her honest and good, and I told him so; but I couldn't get the word from him. He never meant to marry her, sir! I'd only got time just then to knock him down, for I wanted to get her off, quick, to where I'd been thinking of. She's safe and sound now with Mrs. Mason, the mission woman as works for you. There she'll be found, and I'm writing to you to say good-bye for ever. I begun to hope—but that's neither here nor there—I s'pose I'm one of the sort as can't be helped. But God bless you all the same, sir, for trying; and don't think no more of me, for I'm off to Southampton, after Mr. Harcourt. If he's on earth, I'll find him; and then—the Lord have mercy upon him!

"From yours truly,
"AMOS BLOGGS."

Southampton! Harcourt! What if Bloggs should attack him without finding out his mistake! Aubyn looked at the time-table, then at his watch. Yes, just time!

Seizing his hat, and pausing but a moment in the hall to give the servant a message for the curate, he ran out, and into the road, jumped into the first empty cab he saw, and bade the man drive to Kensington. He would get back to the station in time for the midday train.

"To America, and without saying a word to us!" ejaculated Dorothy, after Aubyn had told her that part of the news. "Oh, Reginald, what has happened? There must be some serious misunderstanding between Mabel and him! She has not been like herself lately; but I thought—I hoped——"

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His eyes were gravely downcast.

"She has mentioned nothing of—any cause for anxiety to you, Dorrie?"

"Nothing special. But the whole tone of her letters has made me anxious."

"Better get her to return home," thinking that perhaps Mabel might have heard the rumour about Lucy. It might be that which was troubling her; and if the sisters were together, Mabel would perhaps unburden her mind, not caring himself to repeat the ugly story to Dorothy unless it were absolutely necessary to do so. "Only tell her one thing from me—that I know—say that I know—Harcourt is as deserving our respect as he has ever been."

"Has he been accused of anything then, Reginald?" wonderingly.

"Yes, and unjustly, as I know. Remember I have said that. Why can't you persuade her to come home, and open her heart to you? If a stupid story about Gerard has reached her, you can set her mind at rest by saying that I know it to be absolutely false."

"But—oh, Reginald, if it seems against him, she will tell no one—not even me," anxiously. "And—and I have tried so often, and so unsuccessfully, to induce her to return. Could not you go down, and see what you can do?"

"I have my work cut out for me—more perhaps than I shall be able to compass." He was, in fact, about to follow Bloggs to Southampton by the midday train. Bloggs must have found out that Harcourt was about to join the vessel at Southampton, and gone there after him. If Bloggs had been in time, Aubyn feared that he himself would be too late to prevent the consequences he feared. But it was just possible Harcourt might have got on board before Bloggs arrived, in which case he would be more likely to be safe. "Let Parker," he went on, "take some urgent message from your aunt; she will be ready enough to send one for such a purpose; or, better still, just say that Mabel is wanted at home immediately, without explaining why, and her very anxiety about you will bring her. There has been some great mistake, and a story may have reached her which she should never have heard, and that may be the cause of her trouble. I am following Harcourt to Southampton on the chance of the vessel being delayed. If I get there before he starts, I may be able to induce him to return."

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"Only bring him back to us; make him understand it will be for her happiness."

"I wanted yesterday to give him the hint we agreed should be given about Mabel's mistake in fancying it was of you he was thinking. Had I known he was going so soon, I would have made him listen to me then. He shall hear this time, if I can only get the opportunity. Take care of my Dorrie while I am away." Taking her face between his hands, he kissed the sweet lips, said good-bye to the loving eyes, and in another moment was gone.

"How anxious he seems!" murmured Dorothy, little supposing, in her ignorance of Bloggs' intention, how much there was to fear. But she thought Reginald had only to explain the mistake Mabel had made in supposing Gerard cared for her sister, and that the report against him, whatever it was, was now known to be false, and he would be ready enough to return. Even if Gerard had set out, a telegram to the first place the vessel touched at would bring him back. "We must have Mabel here to meet him when he comes back, and then all will be well!"

She proceeded at once to take her aunt and Parker into her confidence in the matter of making the request for Mabel's immediate return appear, as Reginald had suggested, as urgent as possible.

* * * * *

At last the long-looked-for letter Mabel had been hoping for, yet half-fearing to see, was put into her hands. Gerard's writing! She would know the worst, or best, whichever it was, now! She went to her own room, and, locking herself in, broke open the envelope, and hurriedly ran through the contents; then read it more slowly a second and a third time, as though to make quite sure of the meaning, her heart beating heavily the while.

"Good-bye, Mabel. Good-bye to all that is best in the world for me. I saw what your heart was prompting you to say the other night, and I could not let you speak the words lest they should altogether unman me; indeed, it was unnecessary. I know how troubled you are for me. Nor could I tell you then what it was in my mind to do. I can appreciate your kindness and pity, but I am not to be helped that way. I only want you not to blame yourself in the slightest degree, as I fear a tender conscience may incline you to do. I alone was to blame for

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my mad folly in taking your love for granted as I did; an impertinence I shall not easily forgive myself for. I must have been blinded by conceit or stupidity to approach you in that way. You, of all women in the world! That look of almost repulsion in your eyes will haunt me for the rest of my life; it showed me my mistake as nothing else could. I thought I was sufficiently master of myself to remain near you; but I think so no longer. I can only make sure of myself by putting the sea betwixt us. Only on the other side of the world shall I be sure of not offending in that way again. Meantime, the love which has kept me yours will keep me yours—as I understand this, and you never can—to the end. When, if ever, I am able to regard you, as you perhaps will be, as another man's wife, I will return. Meanwhile, you must not think my life is spoiled; rather think of me as hard at work, and not, I hope, for myself. Wright will come back in a year or two. He will have it that we are to be together as long as we both live; but tell Soames my will is the stronger, and I promise he shall return to her sooner than he expects. God bless you, Mabel! Yours,

"GERARD."

She caught the letter to her beating heart, holding it pressed there with both hands.

"Yours, oh, Gerard! To be yours, until death us do re-unite!"

Her mind could for the moment grasp only that one thought. Distance between them seemed as nothing; he was hers, and she was his. How could she have been so disloyal as to fear? He must know the truth now. He spoke of being about to leave England, but that must of course be stopped at once. She sent a telegram to Dorothy.

"Tell Gerard I made a great mistake, and ask him to remain;" making sure by going herself to the office and seeing it despatched.

On her return to the house, she found a new surprise awaiting her. Parker had arrived. Parker, armed with authority, and determined that it should not be her fault if she did not succeed in inducing the truant to return. With a very mysterious face and manner, she informed Mabel that her presence was urgently required in town.

"And Mrs. Harcourt hopes you will at once accompany me home, Miss Leith."

Mabel's ready acquiescence not a little astonished as well as relieved Parker. She had indeed at once jumped to the conclusion that her "presence," as Parker called it, was required by

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some one besides her aunt. Gerard was there, and he knew! It was Gerard she was going to see.

Leaving Parker to arrange with Soames, Mabel made her way with a light heart down to the drawing-room, where was Mrs. Brandreth, and not alone. She was at the piano, trying a new song, and beside her stood Mr. Leicester.

"Oh!" ejaculated Mabel, who had rushed into the room without much ceremony, her cheeks aglow, and her eyes brilliant with excitement; "I hoped—I thought you were alone."

"Do you wish to speak to me, Miss Leith?" asked Mrs. Brandreth, in a tone of extreme gentleness, intended to be in effective contrast with the other's *brusquerie*, in "dear Edward's" eyes.

"Yes. I find I must go to town at once. I hope it will be no inconvenience to you."

"Inconvenience," repeated Mrs. Brandreth, with a slight shrug of the shoulders. "It has been all holiday of late, you know. But I think I ought to ask where you are going, and to whom?"

"To my aunt, Mrs. Brandreth. She has just sent for me."

"May I enquire who your aunt is, Miss Leith?"

"The Mrs. Harcourt who wrote to you when I came."

"Mrs. Harcourt! I thought she was a lady of some standing."

"Well, I suppose she is"—carelessly.

Part of the truth suddenly dawned upon Mrs. Brandreth. Mrs. Harcourt's nieces were the rich Miss Leiths. But why allow one of them to go out as a governess? Then something else occurred to her.

"And of course your aunt is some relative of Mr. Harcourt's?"

"She is his stepmother."

"I see. Still, I do not understand why your aunt should allow you to go out as a governess, Miss Leith. Some disagreement at home, I suppose?"

"No. The truth is, it was a whim of mine to try the governessing, Mrs. Brandreth. I wanted to prove my capability for work to them at home, and my aunt, much against her will, yielded to my persuasions."

"You mean, I suppose, that there was no necessity for you to earn money, and you were simply masquerading here?"

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"I do not see that there was any masquerading about it. But I ought, perhaps, to have taken you into my confidence as to its not being necessary to get my living as a governess. All the same, I did really do my best for the children, and considering——"

Was she going to allude to the smallness of her salary? Mrs. Brandreth hurriedly put in—all the more hurriedly for noticing her lover's eyes fixed upon Mabel with an expression in them she had never seen when they fixed upon herself—"I have been deceived from beginning to end, it appears. My brother-in-law has evidently been taken into your confidence all through, though I myself have not been. And I can see now why Mr. Harcourt was invited here."

"As I told you, Mr. Aubyn knew nothing of the family connection when he invited Gerard here. They had been friends at Oxford. We met quite unexpectedly, and then the truth came out. But I asked Reginald to say nothing about it for a while, because I wanted to go on showing that I could do the work I had undertaken to do."

"I can understand Mr. Harcourt being Gerard to you, under the circumstances, Miss Leith, but I cannot understand my brother-in-law being Reginald, if your assertion that no engagement exists between you be true," with a glance toward Mr. Leicester, to which he was fain to reply with a slight lifting of the eyebrows, that he hoped would not be seen by Mabel.

It was not seen. Mabel had no eyes for him as she replied—"He is going to marry my sister."

Astonishment kept Mrs. Brandreth silent for a moment. But she very quickly recognized the *rôle* it was best to play—that of the deceived, but trusting and forbearing woman, who, instead of retaliating, was inclined to be considerate and friendly towards the girl that had deceived her. She therefore accepted the position with graceful diplomacy. "It might have been better to take me into your confidence, I think, Miss Leith. I could, in that case, have spared you as well as myself some annoyance."

"It was due to you, Mrs. Brandreth, I think."

"I will order the brougham to take you to the station. Shall I send a maid with you to town?"

"No, thank you; my sister's maid is here. I only wanted to tell you I was going, and to say good-bye."

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Mrs. Brandreth offered her hand. "I hope we shall meet again under pleasanter circumstances."

"Thank you, and good-bye. Good-bye, Mr. Leicester."

He gave her a stiff little bow for reply. It would be a long time before Edward Leicester entirely forgave her, though he tried to persuade himself that things were far better for him as they were, and very nearly succeeded—when he was not looking at her. Just now, with her new hopes, she looked in radiant contrast with the somewhat faded "lady of his choice." But Mabel was smilingly offering her hand, and, recognizing the exigencies of the situation, he took it in his own, and said a word or two about hoping she would have a pleasant journey up. He was a little astonished, as well as annoyed, at the thrill that ran through him when his hand touched hers for a moment.

Mabel arrived home to hear that Gerard was gone, and that Aubyn had followed him to Southampton in the hope of inducing him to return. But she would not allow to herself that she was disheartened. At worst—if Reginald did not arrive in time—it would only be, as Dorrie said, to telegraph to the first place the vessel touched at.

The hours passed slowly away, spent by Mabel in wandering restlessly from room to room, still insisting to herself there was nothing to fear, and that she did not fear. At any moment Gerard and Reginald might be expected now.

Once Dorothy ventured to say, "Reginald told me that there has been some false report about Gerard. I do not know what it is, but—— Dear Mab, have you heard it? Is it that which is troubling you? If so, Reginald bade me tell you that he knows the story to be quite false."

"And so do I," returned Mabel. "What makes you think I am troubled? What is there to trouble me, I should like to know?"—irritable and unnerved with the consciousness of a foreboding which she could not account for.

But as the hours went by without any tidings, they saw that the strain was becoming almost too much for her. The least sound, the mere opening of a door, caused her to tremble and whiten, as though with some terrible dread that ill news was at hand. "Why does not Reginald write or telegraph?" she irritably exclaimed.

They could only murmur something to the effect that news must soon arrive now. They were in fact themselves beginning

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to fear that something had happened, though they strove to conceal it from her.

At last news came. A telegram, of a very few words, which the sisters eagerly read together, then let the paper flutter to the carpet at their feet, gazing at each other with terrified eyes and whitening faces.

Mrs. Harcourt picked up the paper, and, trembling with excitement, read—"Been in great anxiety. Fear there is bad news to come. Try to prepare your minds, to that you may be able to spare M. as much as possible."

"Spare M. That seems as though it were intended for me!" ejaculated Mabel in a high, frightened tone. "Only," pressing her hands over the precious letter hidden beneath her dress, "there can be nothing to be spared from, can there, Dorrie? Can there, Aunt Jenny?" looking from one to the other with pleading eyes. "What could there be, you know?"

Another hour of terrible anxiety; her troubled companions striving to nerve themselves and Mabel for what was to come. Then a second telegram. "Sad news. Wright on his way back with me."

"Wright! Where is Gerard, then?—Where is he?" ejaculated Mabel, turning upon the other two with wild eyes.

"I—I am afraid something has happened," faltered Dorothy, in a broken voice, the shocked expression of her face—her whole tone and manner—showing that it was something very serious. In fact, Parker had also received a telegram from Aubyn, and, as he bade her do, had secretly broken the news to her young mistress. "Dear Mab," went on Dorothy, "if there is anything to bear, you will try to bear it well, will you not, for all our sakes?"

"There is nothing to bear," in her dread of something worse forcing her thoughts in another direction, her whole mind now fastening upon the hope that they alluded to the report that had got about. With that letter against her heart, nothing they could say with reference to that cruel story could make the slightest difference to her now. "Yours to the end—Yours!" she whispered to herself.

When they shook their heads, and tried to say something which might prepare her for what they had to communicate, she would listen to not a word. Dorothy's white face, and tearful, pitying looks, and Mrs. Harcourt's more open distress, as they

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hovered anxiously about her, were now received with a defiant smile; or, worse still, a little jest. Moreover, Dorothy's attempt to suggest what had occurred, by drawing down the blinds of the room they were in, only made Mabel excitedly draw them up again, with an almost angry word about her sister's taste for gloom and dulness.

"It is very terrible," murmured Dorothy to her aunt. "We can only wait for Reginald's arrival. He will help us to soften the blow."

That night Aubyn came—he and Wright. They knew then that all hope was gone, and that the terrible truth must now be told.

"He is gone. You did not arrive in time, I suppose? That is the terrible news they have been trying to tell me?" said Mabel, with head erect and a little defiant smile, as Aubyn entered the room, came towards her, and took her hand. Then, blanching to the lips at sight of his white set face and grave eyes, but still refusing to see what they might have told her, she added: "Well, he cannot have gone too far for a telegram to reach him, and it will not take so very long to come back, and then those who doubted him will have to——"

"Dear Mabel," murmured Dorothy, "we have not doubted him."

"Then why do you all act like this, putting on that absurd look of distress? It's—it's quite ridiculous!" looking at them wildly, as though finding it increasingly difficult to battle against her fears.

"If you are thinking of the rumour that got about, that is known now not to have been true, Mabel," gently put in Aubyn. "We know Harcourt was an honourable gentleman."

"Was?—Was?"

She was answered only by their silence.

"Do you mean—Oh, not that! No, no, no, not that!" putting forth her hands, palms outwards, as though to ward off the terrible truth; then falling prone at their feet, lost to everything.

They lovingly tended her, venturing to give way a little to their own grief now that she lay insensible. Presently her wandering senses came back, and, after a quick look into their faces, as though to discover whether what she had heard were true or only some terrible dream, she turned her face to the wall, lying quite still on the couch where they had placed her.

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They watched her for a few moments with anxious eyes, kneeling by her side, until Aubyn broke the silence by offering up, in a low, broken voice, the solemn and touching prayer for the dead.

It was some little relief to see that she understood, though she spoke no word, lying with her hands crossed on her breast, as though over some treasure. They watched by her side, venturing no further word of consolation, until she opened her eyes again, and turned them upon Aubyn, whispering: "Tell me!"

He saw that it was best to tell as much as she could bear, and replied: "There was a collision in the fog, a few hours after the vessel had started from Southampton, and he was amongst the lost. Wright was saved, and when you are able to bear it he will tell you the rest. We have reason to rejoice as well as mourn for our dead."

"Bring Wright here."

"Dear Mabel, when you are a little more——"

"Now!"

"Dear Mabel, when you are more able to listen—to-morrow," whispered Dorothy, tears raining down her white cheeks.

"Now!"

Aubyn went out of the room, and presently returned with Wright, looking very pale and nervous.

Her eyes all too bright, and two fever spots burning in her cheeks, Mabel looked at him. "Tell me—everything!"

Wright looked a little doubtfully and anxiously towards Aubyn, who replied: "Yes, I think it is best—everything."

"We had left Southampton about ten hours, I think, when it happened. A dense fog came on. We were going very slowly, sounding the fog horn, and the captain was taking every possible precaution, when suddenly a large homeward-bound steamer ran into us. Both vessels were almost wrecked, and ours—the *Elora*—was found to be fast settling down. We could obtain no help from the other vessel, for they seemed almost as bad off as we were, and getting out their boats for the crowd of scared people on deck. As quickly as possible the boats of the *Elora* were lowered, but there was great excitement and confusion on board, and one of the largest was lost as soon as launched. Then it was seen that the greater part of those on board might be saved, but not all. Two of the boats were filled, chiefly with women and children, and pulled away to get clear of the vessel before

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she went down. I noticed how hard my master worked to get the women and children safely off. We were to go in the last boat. He told me to go first, and just before I went over the side I saw him look hurriedly round, as though to see what the chances were, and then take something from his breast-pocket, and turn away a moment, I think to put his lips to it. It is a little book in some foreign language that he always carried about with him, and was so often reading. He put it into my hands with the words: 'If we should chance to lose sight of each other, give this to Mr. Aubyn for me, he will know whom I wish to have it.'"

"Give it to me," whispered Mabel, turning for a moment towards Aubyn.

He put it into her hands. None there doubted any more than did she for whom it was intended.

A much worn pocket Greek Testament. She held it pressed over the letter, and fixed her eyes once more upon Wright's face.

"I thought he was going to follow me, but I know now he never meant to do so. I saw him say a word or two to one of the crew, and it was he that took the vacant place. He told us afterwards that Mr. Harcourt bade him go instead, because he had a wife and children at home, and my dear master's life was of no importance to anybody, he said. No importance—his life! Well, it will all be known now he's gone! There he stood, calm and smiling, and waving his hand as though it was all nothing—that was just like him. By that time the fog had cleared a little, and we saw the big ship plunge like a frightened thing, then lift, and suddenly go down stern foremost. I never saw him again. My dear, dear master! I'd have gone down by his side, I would, and he knew it!"

There was silence again for a few moments, broken only by Wright's sobs. Then came the words spoken with anxious carefulness, as though by the lips of one dying who felt that life was slipping away, and there was no time to spare:

"Please—take care—of—Wright."

And Mabel lay back once more unconscious.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

The shadow of death was upon the house, and all within was silence and desolation. Mrs. Harcourt, Dorothy, and Aubyn were in deep distress, and the servants went about with quiet steps, and pale scared faces, speaking in whispers. Mabel, the beautiful, the beloved, lay at the point of death, struck down in her young strength by brain-fever in its worst form. There seemed not the faintest hope of her recovery.

To lose her now—to have the anguish of seeing her pass away from them unconscious of what, could she have known it, might have brought her back to life!

Gerard Harcourt was saved. The day after Mabel's seizure had come the news that he and another had been picked up almost insensible, when floating upon a spar from the sunken vessel by an outward-bound ship, and landed at Marseilles. He had at once telegraphed to set at rest the minds of those at home, and make inquiries as to the safety of Wright.

A reply had been immediately sent off, giving him all-sufficient reason for returning by the quickest route. Within thirty-six hours he was in the house, in deeper anxiety than the rest, and as unable as they to do anything to help Mabel.

The house resounded with her cries, while they, who would gladly have laid down their lives to save her, could do nothing. She unconsciously bared her soul to them, intensifying their love and misery at the same time.

"Nothing true—nothing left to believe in? Who said it—who dared to say it? And so she killed him with her cruelty. Come back to me, Gerard! just to say you forgive. Love Dorrie's Gerard? Hush, it must never be told! Bury it deep and safe. Where so safe as in a loving heart? And so she killed him with her cruelty. Her love went a-sailing—and—what happened then? You took out your heart and put it safe into the little book, and sent it home to make me good. Down, down to find out the secrets. All wrapt about with seaweed, and rocked to sleep by the waves, with his face upturned to the stars! 'Sea nymphs hourly ring his knell.' They won't let me come to you, Gerard. Gerard? Gone! With Lucy? How could that be? It was Dorrie, you know—darling Dorrie! You don't know him,

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Mrs. Brandreth. My Gerard will marry her if he promised. Ah, cruel woman, how dare you smile! Some of the work Dorrie does. I will wear ugly gowns like yours, Dorrie, and you will take me among those dreadful people, and teach me not to mind their horrid dirty ways. Ah, no! you said I was to keep in society, didn't you, Gerard? Yes; I will try to be kind to that silly Mrs. Bruce, and—oh, Gerard! shall I have to be kind to those Alfords, and that dreadful Mrs. Weston, with her old pink cheeks and dyed hair and wicked ways? Yes, wicked, Aunt Jenny! Isn't it wicked of her to say such things about people, you dear darling? Nothing true, who said it? Not Gerard! —no, no! Tell me it was not he—tell me!"

Cut to the heart, but helpless, they listened to her wild talk, incapable of rendering her any assistance, or even of making her understand that they were endeavouring to give it, though she was hour by hour drawing nearer to the terrible crisis when she might pass away from them without a sign—unconscious of the love that was so near to her.

They would have spared Gerard; but all their well-meant efforts to keep him out of hearing were in vain. He stationed himself just outside her room, deaf to their entreaties that he would spare himself. Waving them aside, he stood at his post with downbent head and compressed lips, pierced to the heart by the words which were as sharp arrows to his conscience, showing him, as they did, not only herself, but himself. None, perhaps, saw and understood so much of what Gerard was passing through as did Aubyn, and he saw too clearly to regret it.

When at length the terrible hour came—the crisis, when the doctors had said it would be seen whether they might hope, or must resign themselves to the worst—Gerard passed it alone in his room. It was Aubyn who carried the verdict to him, compressing it into the one word:

"Life!"

The door had been opened a little way, and then hurriedly closed again, not even he being allowed to witness the first effects of the news.

To their loving, impatient hearts it seemed, at first, that life had been only reprieved for a while, so slowly, weakly and reluctantly did she take up the burden of living again. It was so evident that she cared not to make the slightest effort of her own, and they dared not as yet, until the weakened brain had

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recovered its elasticity sufficiently to bear the strain of a great joy, venture to make known to her the one thing which would renew her zest for life. It was only for their sakes that she made the least attempt to appear in a degree interested in what was going on about her, and this, she told herself, but to give them time to get reconciled to the idea of the parting. The family doctor, whom they had been obliged to take partly into their confidence, interdicted any allusion to Gerard's rescue until she had advanced another stage in her recovery.

Meantime Mabel took no heed of what was going on, asking no questions, and lying silent and motionless in a half-dreamy state, which the expression of the beautiful grey eyes—seeming to be always looking into distance, as though striving to pierce the veil—showed to be at most but the resignation to live. Hour after hour she remained thus, without speaking, save some word in reply to a loving speech from her tender nurses.

The one only thing that seemed to be of any solace to her was the little worn Greek Testament, which always, awake or asleep, was kept close to her hand. As she lifted it to her lips she would sometimes whisper, with a piteous look at her sister, "See how worn, Dorrie; look at the pencil-marks," then hurriedly hide it away again, a treasure almost too precious to be looked at even by Dorrie's eyes.

Mrs. Harcourt did her best to obey orders, by looking and talking as cheerfully as possible in the presence of Mabel; but she was too apt to suddenly break down and burst into tears and piteous lamentations over her "poor darling." to be of any real service.

It was Dorothy, quiet, self-contained Dorothy, who could speak with seeming calmness when her heart was sinking with fear, that was her sister's best help. But not even to Dorothy did Mabel make any allusion to the past, and they were still too much afraid upon her account to venture to say anything which might give her some hint of the truth.

In vain were all their efforts to interest or amuse her. Books put in her way remained unopened. Her favourite flowers, which Gerard hoped might bear some message or suggest some association with the past, were unnoticed, and works of art, successively brought in, now a picture, now a statuette, a piece of rare old china, which she once would have been so enthusiastic over, were barely glanced at. The more they strove to interest and cheer her, the more they seemed to weary her. Did she, for

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their sakes, make some little piteous attempt to appear interested, it always ended in her turning to the wall again, with a weary sigh, and becoming sadder and more silent than before.

At length the doctors began to look grave again. A consultation was held, and it was decided to make a fresh attempt. There must be no longer delay, or she would slip away from them altogether, and this, it seemed, from sheer lack of all desire to live.

Cold December weather; the day which she had once looked forward to for her emancipation from schoolroom work and triumphant return home very close at hand. Now! Was she to be emancipated in another way? She lay back in a low chair, her hands folded loosely in her lap, and her eyes absently following the firelight, flickering fantastically about the beautiful objects in the room, brought there with a hope that they might attract her notice, when the door softly opened, and Lucy May slowly, and not a little nervously, entered the room. She was doing her best to appear at ease, and to bear in mind the careful instructions she had received. But the small tray she carried, upon which was some light dainty to tempt the invalid's appetite, shook a little, and the jingle of the glass upon it, to say nothing of her silence—so few entered there without some loving word—attracted Mabel's attention.

"Lucy!" she murmured, with a little half smile. In another moment memory was at work. A faint tinge of colour came into her cheeks, and a look of enquiry into her eyes. Why was Lucy there?

"I am so glad that you are getting a little better now, Miss Leith."

"Thank you."

"Shall I light the lamp?" It had been left unlighted in order to give Lucy an excuse for remaining in the room, by appearing to be engaged for a while.

"Thank you."

"The days are so short now, are they not, miss? We shall soon have Christmas here," recommenced Lucy, as with trembling hands she lighted the lamp, then arranged and rearranged the glass of jelly and plate upon the tray. Mabel made no reply, and Lucy, in her agitation—she was apt to lose nerve when it was most required—was trying in vain to recollect the little speech she had been so carefully tutored to make, and remembering only the solemn warnings that had been given her

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as to the serious consequences which might come of a mistake, was on the point of bursting into tears. But, after a nervous glance towards the partly opened door, she hesitatingly began again:

"I dare say you are surprised to see me here, Miss Leith. But Mrs. Harcourt is so sorry for me; and I did not like to go home just yet, because—that is, I mean—— Of course there is nothing for her to be sorry about, for it's known now that it was all a dreadful mistake about—— Mr. Har——"

"Hush!"

"But I mustn't. I—I mean I'm afraid you supposed—I do not think you know how it occurred, Miss Leith, and—I should so much like to tell you, if you could only listen without its making you ill."

Mabel remained white and silent, and Lucy went on.

"I told—people, something that was not true, Miss Leith. I thought it was true, but it wasn't, and I am so very, very sorry, because I'm afraid it made you think ill of Mr. Harcourt."

"Nothing could do that," said Mabel, with a little sob in her voice, wearily adding, "You need not go on. I do not want to hear any more. I am tired—another time."

Lucy looked nervously towards the open door behind Mabel again, and, taking her cue, hurriedly recommenced:

"Oh, Miss Leith, dear, do let me tell you—pray do! It was not Mr. Harcourt who used to meet me in the woods and make love to me. I thought it was; but directly I saw Mr. Harcourt I knew that he wasn't him—I mean," anxiously, "that he wasn't the other. And now everybody knows that it was Mr. Noel, who was so wicked as to take the other gentleman's name, on purpose to deceive people by throwing the blame on him. It was Mr. Noel all the time; and he's been finely punished for it, too, according to what's said. He will be obliged to keep his bed for weeks, and he'll never be handsome again, after the beating Amos Bloggs gave him. And he gave him the opportunity to strike back, too, for Amos isn't a coward. He told Mr. Noel where he was to be found if he wanted to have him taken up and sent to prison for it. But Mr. Noel hasn't done nothing to him, and doesn't mean to, they say, on account of not wanting what he did to be made known. But I think Amos needn't have been quite so unkind about it, taking the chain and locket from me, and throwing them in Mr. Noel's face, and vowing he would never have anything more to say

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to me, and all that, as if I could help Mr. Noel being so wicked."

Lucy was meandering on, when a slight sound caught her attention, and, glancing towards the door, she was reminded again, and began afresh.

"There really seems to have been nothing but mistakes about Mr. Harcourt. When Mr. Wright came back with the story about the vessel going down, and—people being lost, I am sure everybody thought——"

"Thought?" repeated Mabel, her attention half caught, then abstracted again, until it was once more aroused by Lucy's words.

"Yes; about so many being lost, and all that," hesitatingly replied Lucy. "It was thought it must be true; but it wasn't, and——"

"What was not true—what?"

"Why, about so many being lost, when they wasn't."

"What?" Mabel sprang to her feet, with white face and wild eyes.

Lucy looked apprehensively at her for a moment, then burst into tears, and moved towards the door. As she drew near, two strong hands took her by the shoulders, and she found herself summarily hustled out of the way, and delivered over to a servant to be "got rid of." A rather ungracious proceeding, Lucy thought, considering that she had done her best to help.

Dorothy had slipped quietly into the room, and had her arms about Mabel, gently impelling her back into the chair, kneeling by her side, and looking up into her eyes with a loving smile.

"You will try to bear the good news bravely, will you not, Mab, dear?"

"Good?"

"Yes, darling, good; and I see you are beginning to understand what it is. Now, Mab, I will not have you look at me in that way. How can I tell you if you do not try to listen more calmly? It is such a good opportunity for proving your self-control and all that, you know. I want you to be a heroine of the kind we two have always admired, brave and strong——"

"Gerard?"

"Yes, dear; quite safe, and at home, and——"

"Gerard!"

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"Pray do not waste your energies in apostrophising him, dearie. There really is no time to waste in that way. You see you have a duty to perform, and that is to get well as quickly as possible, for all our sakes. Between ourselves, Gerard is so very unmanageable, as things are. He will scarcely go away from the door of your room night or day, and keeps the poor auntie almost at her wits' end, and in a continued state of anxiety lest he, too, should be ill. He is now so very impatient, too, in addition to his other defects. Indeed, there will be no peace for any of us until you are well. Though I hope"—raising her voice a little for the benefit of some one near—"he will try to remember that you cannot be expected to get used to things all at once. It would be quite enough if he said just one little word to show you he is not far off."

"Mabel!"

His voice! Mabel sprang to her feet again, her cry of joy ringing through the room.

"Gerard!"

The door slowly opened, and, looking eagerly towards it, her eyes fell upon—the portly form and smiling rubicund face of Dr. Davenport. With a quivering sigh of disappointment she sank back into her seat again.

He advanced towards her, talking in his cheerful, professional way about the temperature of the room; then, touching her pulse, smilingly informed her that it was now quite time she began to do her nurses and him some credit. "You ought to be requiring fresh air, and beef and mutton now, Miss Leith. But you must use your will, you know—I am sure you have a pretty strong one—and try to assist us by taking more nourishment. The most ethereally minded young ladies find it necessary to take food occasionally in this matter-of-fact world, and," in reply to the question he thought he saw on her lips, "we want you to be strong enough to rejoice with your friends over the rescue of Mr. Harcourt. There, I have finished my lecture, and I must ask you to reward me for making it so brief by allowing me to stay here a short time, to look over my notes."

Dismissing Dorothy with a look, he drew a chair towards the table on which stood the shaded lamp, sat down, crossed one knee comfortably over the other, and became absorbed in the contemplation of the hieroglyphics in his note-book.

Mabel was very restless and excited for a while, but of course she could not ask the questions she was longing to ask

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of this "tiresome old man," as she mentally designated him. And there he continued to sit, as though he were ever so welcome, complacently pondering over his memorandums, and making slight alterations here and there.

"Stupid old man, with his fat white hands, and heavy gold pencil-case!" thought Mabel, not just then able to feel as grateful as she ought to feel for past help. "How different these from those other hands that had once held hers in their firm grip—strong, capable, and not too white nor small hands!" She was irritably conscious, too, that had she put her thoughts into words the good doctor would only have smiled benignly upon her, as a young lady who had not yet acquired the right to be taken seriously.

She impatiently twisted and turned about in her chair for a while, then gradually became more composed, lying back silent and motionless, getting accustomed to the great happiness that had come to her; and this, without the over-excitement which had been so much dreaded. When Dr. Davenport presently brought her a composing draught, she informed him, in Mabel fashion, that she had been thinking all sorts of unkind things about him. She was amusedly forgiven, her hand gently patted, in a kind paternal way, by the "fat white" one she had been mentally reviling, and she soon sank into a deep dreamless sleep.

From the time of her awakening all danger was over, and Mabel's health—mental and physical—began rapidly to improve. Her best aids to convalescence were the little notes from Gerard, that Dorothy was continually putting into her hands. She smiled and blushed over them in a way that brought tears of joy to Dorothy's cheeks. Dorothy was now able to indulge in a little talk over her own happiness, with the knowledge that this, too, did Mabel good. But there was no sentimentalizing; their merry conceits—so little did for a jest, now—and graceful fancies keeping the atmosphere clear and healthy.

Mabel was, moreover, beginning to be able to receive visitors, and to her great joy amongst the first came Miss Temple, or Mrs. Worcester as she must now be called. She had heard from Mrs. Leicester that the governess at Beechwoods had left and was ill, and although she did not know how serious Mabel's illness was, Mrs. Worcester had immediately taken steps to find her. She wrote to Mrs. Brandreth, begging her to forward a letter which she enclosed to Miss Leith's address, and the letter

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had come into Dorothy's hands, to whom it afforded ample evidence of the value of Mrs. Worcester's friendship. She begged her dear Miss Leith to come to her in her new home, and be nursed, and petted, and doctored into health and strength again. Allan was looking forward to making her acquaintance, and heartily joined in begging her to lose no time—not to hesitate, but to come to them at once. She would be so welcome, and it would give Allan so fine an opportunity for proving how clever he was, by restoring her to health. It would be quite an advertisement for him, and so forth—a kindly, cheery letter, evidently written in all sincerity.

Mrs. Worcester received a reply, which brought her at once to the house, and she then for the first time discovered that she had, in fact, been making friends with influential people. But her own motives had been made sufficiently manifest to prevent her feeling any scruple in accepting the kindnesses pressed upon her. It was, besides, so evident that Mabel was the happier for her presence there.

Then came the children, Sissy, Mima, and Algy, walking very softly on tiptoe, and at first very silent and awed by the sight of their dear Miss Leith looking so white and ill. But some merry jest of hers soon gave them courage, and they were talking away as unrestrainedly as of old, telling her all the latest news from Beechwoods—news which they themselves considered to be most wonderful.

"Uncle Reggie is going to be married; but that does not matter so much now, for we are going to leave Beechwoods, and live at the Hall. And, would you believe it, Miss Leith, dear? Grace, and Roland, and Willy, and we are all going to be brothers and sisters, now. You must try to guess how that could be," said Algy, with the air of stating a difficult problem, looking gravely up into her face, as he sat on a stool before her, with one foot over his knee.

Having looked duly mystified, she was informed, "It is because mamma is going to be married to Mr. Leicester. That will make us all brothers and sisters, you know. Soames is to go with us for a little while; but she is to be married, too, soon, and her name's going to be Mrs. Wright. You've got to be called the other one's name when you're married, you know. Everybody seems to be going to be married now, but you must wait for me, Miss Leith, I told you. Mr. Harcourt is going to take care of you till I am ready, and he's going to be very kind to you, and give

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you lots of holidays, and 'muse you with stories, and games and things."

Even Mrs. Brandreth made her appearance at Mabel's receptions, as they were called, with gracious smiles and good wishes, ready to condone all that had once seemed little offences against herself, and reckon the Miss Leiths amongst her dearest friends for the future. To a select few, she was afterwards apt to deplore the fact that her husband could never be brought to admire the younger sister. But then dear Edward was so very *exigeant* in his tastes—so few women came up to his standard—and Mrs. Leicester could not but agree with him as to the necessity for women of good breeding keeping in their proper sphere. "Really, you know, her best friends must acknowledge that dearest Mabel had been, to say the least, a little eccentric in her ways."

At length Dr. Davenport gave his permission for Mabel to spend a few hours in the morning room, and then came the long-looked-for meeting between Gerard and her. He was there when she entered, lightly leaning upon Dorothy's arm, and followed with fussy anxiety by her aunt, laden with wraps and restoratives.

"Enough to make one fancy oneself a confined invalid, is it not?" said Mabel, endeavouring to speak lightly, as with tear-dimmed eyes and quivering lips, she put out her hands to him.

"At last!"

Utterly regardless of spectators, Dorothy, Mrs. Harcourt, and a servant in the background, he took her in his arms, and, her confused little attempt at a jest about her aunt and the Lord Chamberlain notwithstanding, sealed the compact on her lips.

But Dorothy had quietly drawn her aunt out of the room again, closing the door upon the lovers, and then came Gerard's second time of asking, as he termed it.

"But you have taken me this time without asking," she murmured, in delightful confusion.

"Mine!"

She was silent a moment, her fingers tremblingly tracing the seam across his sleeve; then whispered, raising her eyes with grave, tender trust to meet his, "'And nought is ours, but what we have foregone.'"

He saw what was in her mind, and his thoughts reverting to that terrible time when he had battled so fiercely against himself, he gravely repeated, "Mine!" After another look at the

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beautiful face, in which the colour came and went too quickly, he more lightly went on: "But how about Dorothy and Aubyn? I don't exactly see where the foregoing came in there."

"Perhaps it was not necessary—for them. Dorothy is so different."

"I see; and Aubyn is so different from me. And the inference is, that the good people get what they want, without having first to forego it."

"The idea! as though good people did not forego the most; and——" she stopped, breaking into a little laugh, as she saw the trap that had been laid for her.

"Then it follows that we are the good people, and Aubyn and Dorothy are nowhere."

"Ah, Gerard, you are just the same as ever!"

"Not improved?"

"No!" lowering her head, until her lips touched his hand. "Only revealed."

THE END.

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